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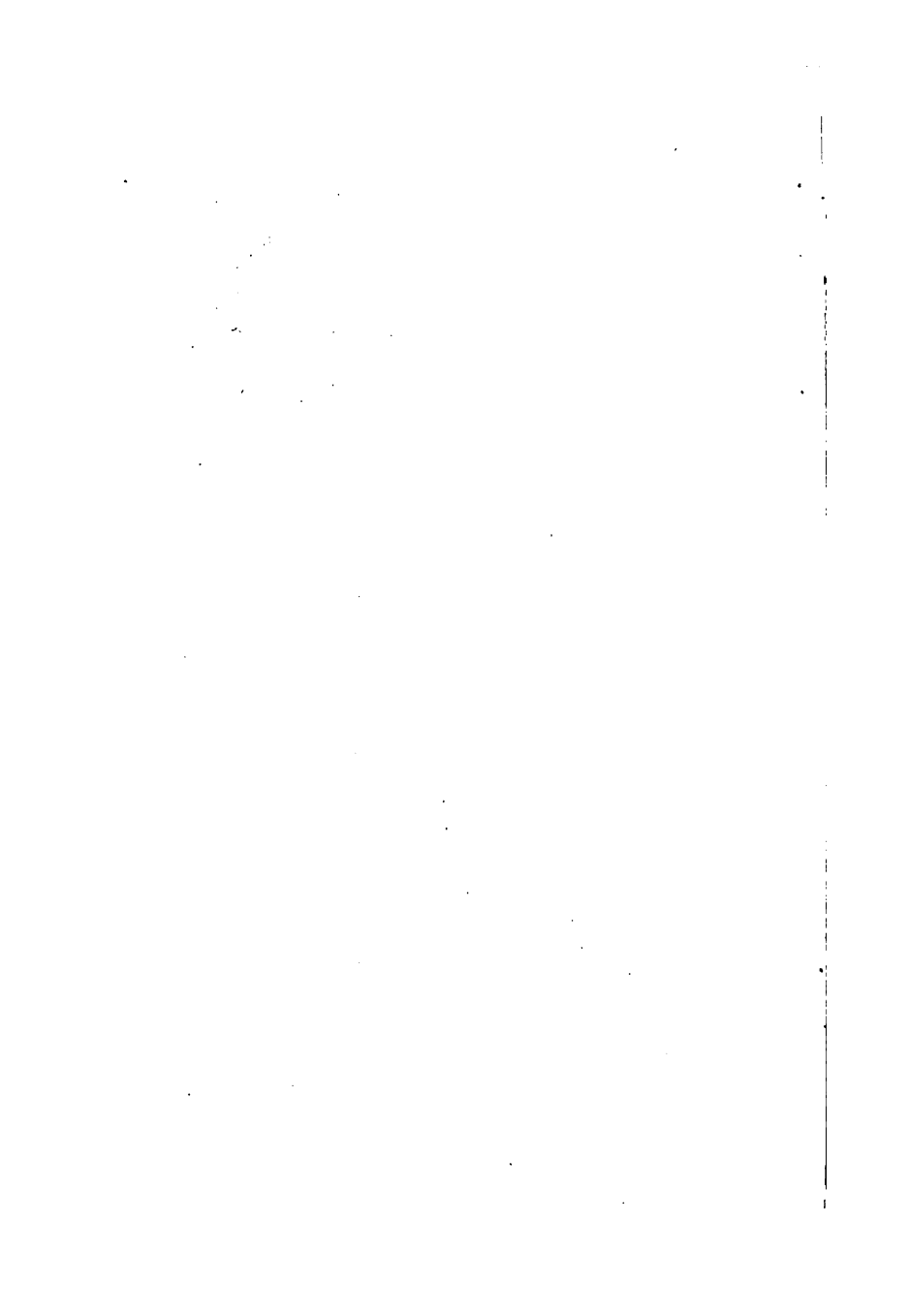
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Threescore Years=  
and Ten.







# **“Threescore=Years=and=Ten.”**



BY

**GEORGE WILKINS, D.D.,**

**ARCHDEACON OF NOTTINGHAM.**

**"O PRÆCLARUM DIEM, CUM AD ILLUD DIVINUM ANIMORUM CONCILIUM  
CŒTUMQUE PROFICISCAR, CUMQUE EX HAC TURBA ET COLLUVIONE DIS-  
CEDAM!"—CICERO DE SENECTUTE.**

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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND  
JOHN JACKSON, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN,

WITH THE FAITHFUL AND SINCERE RESPECT

OF

THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.

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THIS little book, upon the subject of the last years of human life, is written for the edification of all, of whatever age or condition, who may be willing to consider it.

It is indeed a serious subject, one often treated in a manner so gloomy as to discourage a ready contemplation of what ought to have a salutary influence on the character of every Christian ; but to produce this effect, it is not necessary, invariably, to clothe it in such a dark and dismal garb as tends to deter, rather than to invite attention.

Without permitting the great concernment of Death and Judgment to be divested of their awe and momentous import, it is here attempted to connect

the discussion of them, with such reflections as may serve to support the mind against morbid depression ; and by a discrimination of those awful terrors with which the subject is necessarily invested, to connect it also with such incidents, founded on realities, as may induce the reader seriously and fearlessly to consider in what manner, and to what degree, they ought to affect his future conduct.

## THREESCORE-YEARS-AND-TEN.

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*Threescore-years-and-ten*,—Yes,—that is the general limit to man's pilgrimage on earth. But, let us ask,—how many are there who reach it? It is a serious question, and serious questions, even if not unfrequently entertained, seldom leave that deep impression on the mind that their importance deserves. Still, when the death of relatives or friends, especially if sudden, occasion a shock and revulsion of feeling, exciting some reflection upon the cause that has called for our sympathy or woe; the wound, though it may be deep and painful, soon begins to close, and finally to heal, and we are, ere long, turned again into the usual current of our pursuits and actions, until after a time, or succession of times, another and another calamity at length induce deep, serious, and solemn meditation. Then again it may be asked, At what period of life does it occur that we feel a real desire to put our "house in order?" Not in the time of youth, when all is gay and fresh around us, and the figure of death is hardly visible in the

long perspective; not in the middle term of our days, when we exult and revel in the strength and activity of body, and the image of it is concealed in a multitude of cares and pursuits; nor yet, indeed, unless in a serious temperament, is the resemblance more evidently discerned in the advance of life. But, when we pass over the general boundary of our existence, when the threescore-years-and-ten are accomplished, especially if accompanied by a serious illness,—one that often marks the last season in the change of constitution in the human frame—then, and not till then, are we brought to know the number of our days, and experience the necessity of considering them in such a way as “to apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Then, indeed, he who will take account of the shortness of the present life compared with the unnumbered ages of that eternity which is future, will soon become a proficient in the school of true wisdom.

Alas! how many there have been of even more accumulated years, who, gifted with brilliancy of talent and wit, and deemed philosophers from the high order of intellect they possessed,—authors and writers too of history, whose valuable labours in such department remain to counterbalance their objectionable principles,—men who did not take that review of the number of their days which the Psalmist advises, and therefore, became sophists enveloped in the chill damp and deadly schools of Deism. But it is not to such men as reached or approached the

threescore-and-ten-years, that we would draw attention, but to those whose reflections towards the limit of their lives turned upon the religion which they had long embraced, and which they then and previously desired to recommend to those that followed them. These are such as are truly sensitive when bereaved of their relatives and friends, and who while acquiescing with pious resignation in the decrees of an all-wise and merciful Providence, draw from the same divine source that consolation which never fails to administer its balm to them and to all other submissive sufferers. For thoroughly alive to all the feelings of nature, and keenly, though silently, struggling with them, yet recalling the promises attached to their faith, and knowing Him in whom they have ever confided, they, the followers of the crucified Jesus, are by His grace, upheld and strengthened in the time of trouble; they are sad, but not in despair; they are sorrowful, but not without hope. We are not, then, to charge the transient anguish of the mind with apathy, when its poignancy apparently so acute and inconsolable at first, seems too suddenly to have worn away; or to attribute it to a deficiency of sympathy and proper feeling, that it has been of so short duration. For if grief and bitter sorrow were to become more lasting than we generally witness; were they to be long and immoderately indulged, life itself would become a burden too heavy to bear; a long continuation of woe would absorb, and stretch the feelings to such tension as

would soon weaken the energies of the mind and enervate those of the body, and then, so far from the term of threescore-years-and-ten being attained, life would fall short even of the general average and scarcely reach to the half of that extent. No ; the Divine Providence having, in mercy, struck the blow to call consideration upon its own power, and man's frail and precarious existence, permits the wound to cover over for a time, leaving the mind to return to its pursuits and path of probation, and thus brings it to see, and to experience, that it is only by looking forward, and not backward, that man can wend his steps to Heaven.

It is, however, at this season of trial that we naturally feel disposed to seek some sort of abstraction from ordinary pursuits, to reflect with more calmness upon the change which the calamity has produced either in our affairs, or in the future contingences of our station, or, what is of still greater importance, in order to afford the mind contemplation upon the present and future conduct of life to which the event has roused it. We seek, therefore, temporary retirement, and in pursuit of this we court some degree of solitude in the country with the intention of reading and exercise, and change of air ; but if limiting our range to the scenery of a small locality, we very soon find that what lulled and charmed our senses at first, by its uniformity and monotony, in a little while, ceases to act in the manner we had anticipated. Hence we are induced

to move onwards towards the sea-side, where instead of the same woods, and vales, and streams, we may behold a prospect which continually changes, with a freshness of air bracing, and with never ceasing objects to attract and rivet the attention.<sup>1</sup> And as we ramble in a meditative mood along the shore and gaze on the vast expanse of the ocean, we are soon struck with many objects bearing a strong analogy to the vicissitudes of human life.

As we observe the calm surface of the deep, now smooth and placid, we are reminded of the undisturbed serenity and the quiet aspect of society while peace and contentment spring from industry and a full demand of labour. At another time when the breeze which passes along with freshness and health is suddenly changed into a gale, and that gale to a storm which in its violence sweeps over the troubled waters, raising them into mountains, lashing them to rage, and urging them onward with crests of foam till they break upon the shore ; then is exemplified how the perturbations of human passions, and the changes, variations, and excesses of individual and popular commotions disturb the system of society, bringing troubles and misfortunes, and with these, all the train of woes by which discontentment and excesses are produced. Again, when neither in the aspect of

<sup>1</sup> There is a wide field of interest, amusement, and instruction laid open to the Naturalist, on the sea-shore, in the study and pursuit of Marine Zoology.—See P. H. Gosse's "Manual." London : J. Van Voorst.



a calm nor in that of a storm, we gaze upon the sea in a moderate state of commotion, what a moral lesson may we gain from the contemplation of its appearance. Some billows swelling and augmenting as they roll boisterously onward in pride of strength and force, bounding and bursting vainly against the rocks, exemplify, as it were, how the high-blown oppressor with all his power, his pride, and wealth, rushing heedlessly and wantonly over the common paths, and moving boundaries prescribed to differences of society, vainly expends his might against those who scorn his anger, repel his attack, and at length silence his turbulence and noise. Again, at another time we see, in gentle succession, a series of flowing waves following each other in regular order and with a harmony soothing to the ear, and as they come rippling and breaking musically on the shore, retire in gentleness, as if merely to greet and wash it with their surge. These we may fancy to resemble the cheerful and well-disposed among the lower and larger classes of the people, who in the reasonable enjoyment of their festive hours delight to approach those who take pleasure in their sports, being ever ready to acknowledge and to testify their respect for every act of benevolence or courtesy extended towards them.

At another time we remark in our survey of the endless varieties which the sublime surface of the mighty deep offers, how that every wave as it comes to its close is immediately succeeded by another and

another without end, the last obliterating the former. And so it is with the families of the earth, which succeed each other in a continued series; one generation making way for a second, as that second will yield to a third, and so on with others without limit. All is moving—all is progressive; nothing earthly permanently remains. Man comes to his end, if not at an early period, yet the threescore-years-and-ten is his general extended boundary.

It may be said, that whatever similitude these reflections may bear to the vicissitudes of human affairs, they administer no direct relief to the afflicted soul, and can, therefore, only be reckoned as supplying other thoughts to drown or draw it from sorrow. We admit the observation to be true, for, the object of a temporary retirement from society, or from oneself is to create a diversion from the distress which a recent calamity has occasioned, and at the same time, to blend it with some religious reflections upon the providence of God by whose inscrutable wisdom that calamity has been sent, “whether to try the patience of the sufferer for the example of others, and that their faith may be found in the day of the LORD glorious and honourable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity, or in order to correct and amend whatsoever hath offended the eyes of their heavenly FATHER.”

And what nobler object manifesting His wisdom and power can be suggested to a sorrowing mind than the contemplation of the mighty mass and swell of waters visibly kept within boundaries they can-

not, pass but at the will of Him who silently says,—  
“So far shalt thou come and no further.” What a contrast does this afford to the consolation which the friend of Cicero administered to that great man and philosopher upon the death of a beloved daughter, when for a similar purpose he left his own house for the retirement of the country. “I lately fell,” says his friend S. Sulpicius, who had just previously experienced a similar loss, “I lately fell into a reflection, which, as it afforded me great relief to the inquietude of my own heart, may possibly contribute likewise to assuage the anguish of yours. On my return out of Asia, as I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, I amused myself with contemplating the circumjacent countries. Behind me lay Ægina, before me Megara; on my right I saw Piræus, and on my left Corinth. These cities once so flourishing and magnificent, now presented nothing to my view but a sad spectacle of desolation. Alas! I said to myself, shall such a short-lived creature as man complain when one of his species falls in the common course of nature, whilst in this narrow compass of time so many great and glorious cities, formed for a much longer duration, thus lie extended in ruins? Believe me, I found my mind greatly refreshed and comforted by these reflections.”

Now, what was there in all this (beyond the proof of the instability of human affairs,) what was there in all this reference to the crumbling works of man, in any way comparable with reflections upon the

works of God, especially when in the one case we are spectators of the continued and visible operation of the Creator's hand, and in the other, of the frail demolition of man's greatest labours? And more than this, as we may observe, the variety of vessels, some of larger bulk, others small and diminutive, sweeping and skimming along the surface of the waters, now calm, and at other times so rough and mighty as to threaten imminent danger and destruction—in all of which there are many souls of men, whose bodily existence hangs, as it were, by a thread, or with what is said to be, a mere plank between them and eternity, exciting the reflection that although they are now “carried up to Heaven, and now down to the deep,” they are preserved by the providence of Him Who ever watches over them, and over others every where equally exposed every moment to a similar, though invisible fate. Such scenes and such contemplations fail not to draw from the pious mind the inward sentiment—“Oh that men would therefore praise the LORD for His goodness, and declare the wonders He doeth for the children of men!” and to remember the application of the Divine,—“There is a Ship in which we are all embarked : there is a troubled sea on which we all sail : there are storms by which we are all presently overtaken : and there is a haven which we all desire to enter and behold. For the Church is a ship ; the world is a sea ; temptations, persecutions, and afflictions are the waves of it ; the Prince of the

powers of the air is the stormy wind which raises them, and Heaven is the only port of rest and security."

When we observed that the sorrow and grief for the departed whom we venerated and loved may appear, in some instances, too rapidly to have died away amidst the absorbing cares and changes of the shifting scenes of life ; it is only just to ask,—Are there no after periods of contemplation and seriousness when the mind has been brought back to reflect upon the character, the affections, and the worth of those who are thus gone before us, and whose example and virtues are again pressed upon our memory for imitation and guidance ? Are there no wakeful nights when, in spirit, they rise up in dreams to arrest attention and to revive former feelings towards them ? Are there no scenes of sickness, when in languor and suffering we recall them to our senses and consider how they bore their pains and trials, and how we, like them, must look above to that power from whence they derived consolation and support, and on which they grounded their future hopes ? Yes, indeed, these have often recurred at such times, and under various circumstances have made strong impressions upon us ! Then it may be asked again,—Have such impressions been deep and lasting ? Has not their intensity faded away on the restoration of health, by change of scene and society, and by falling again into the current of worldly affairs ? Alas ! all this we must admit ge-

nerally to be the case, and although the exceptions are, happily, of great extent in number, and particularly so amidst the happy pious and religious, who (God be thanked) are not a few, yet with the great mass of mankind the confession though sad, is just,—and just in all the ordinary periods and stations of life, save, perhaps, in that, when the limit of threescore-years-and-ten is passed. In that season, the weakness, and commonly the sickness and infirmity attending it demand reflection: mental powers generally, though not always, are less vigorous,—bodily energies decline,—the feelings become less sensitive, and there has now become a gradual bowing down to the grave; the grave itself is almost visible, and an invisible attraction to it is experienced.

But, does this create alarm and fearful apprehension? Not in him who has in the several periods of his life, and who in the support of sound religious principles has held converse with his God in private and public supplication: not in him, who, confiding in the promises of Revelation has maintained a steadfast faith in CHRIST as his SAVIOUR, through Whose all-sufficient advocacy and intercession he has implored His grace and sanctification while on earth, to qualify him, through the sole mediation and merits of that SAVIOUR, for admittance into Heaven.

If then, length of days, and extension of life be granted, accompanied with reflections and feelings such as these, how grateful ought the Septuagenarian

to be to the Almighty for the grant of so much more time, than to the generality of others, to repent, to confirm his faith, and to amend his ways before his removal from this sublunary scene of existence.

But will any wise man,—will any reflecting religious man, in any period of his life defer this faith, repentance, and amendment, from the uncertain expectation or hope that he may calculate upon another time yet before him when he can, then, make his peace with Heaven? Can he satisfy the occasional discomfitures of his soul, by an easy promise, that he may, at a future day, set in earnest “to put his house in order,” and that when the season of youth is passed, or that, even in the middle career of life, he may afterwards become wiser, more thoughtful, less engaged, and better fitted to enter upon the arrangement of his final account? What hazardous, what presumptuous reckoning is this! Does he not owe his God that which the longest and purest life could never pay? Can he calculate upon one moment’s existence beyond the one in which he now breathes? Can he anticipate futurity, and promise to accomplish that hereafter which if he can do now, he has no assurance that he can ever do again? Can he promise himself greater energy of mind and greater strength of body to do what he may now only be able to effect? Will he wait the coming of the period of the threescore-years-and-ten, and then only offer to his God the dregs of life rather than the vigour of an earlier devotion to His service? If he

be so lost to sense and goodness as to defer to an expected extreme limit, the time for consideration and repentance, and thus cling to the presumptuous notion, that, with his present constitution and frame, he may risk reaching the term which he sees extended to so many others compassed with infirmity: let him know that even to these, many and innumerable as he may suppose them to be, the number is exceedingly limited, and if limited to these few, what can be his pretensions to be included with them?

Yes, indeed, that the number of the aged in comparison with the young and mature is small, may be estimated by an easy calculation. For, the population of the whole world computed at 1075 millions, and the number of daily deaths at 91,324, shows that in every hour that passes 4260 souls leave the world, while a still greater number of human bodies enter it—the lesser wave in the ocean of life being followed by a greater! How astonishing and how awakening are the reflections arising from this computation! showing us the wisdom of preparing to quit our earthly tents, and of being ready at any moment to join the enormous flight of spirits, which, although unseen, is, at every instant of time, winging their course to the unknown world destined to an eternity of bliss or woe! See, too, in the manifold instances in which extended years are granted, how imbecility of mind, prostration of strength, the dimness of the eye, the hardness of hearing, the dumb-



ness of feeling, and all the train of corresponding infirmities too commonly attend the aged, who may exclaim with Barzillai,—“Can I discern between good and evil? Can I taste what I eat, or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men, and singing women?” No, indeed: and yet there are those who defer religious contemplations and preparation for eternity to this last exhausted period of existence, presuming upon exemption from such mortal “ills, as flesh is heir to,” because they are now robust and strong,—because the tree has taken such firm root and is now so vigorous, that it may risk the chance of the storm and tempest; but, at length, the lightning’s flash strikes it,—its gnarled trunk is riven asunder, and it lies prostrate at the feet of saplings destined to occupy its place!

But supposing the opposite case, and that the aged man is blest with extraordinary health, clear intellect, ordinary vision, and other faculties, apparently little impaired; yet if his life has not been marked by spiritual influences, but merely occupied and engrossed by worldly affairs,—if he has been moral in order to obtain outward respect, and so far religious as to preserve appearances,—has deferred from time to time to devote his mind or to conform his conduct to higher views and interests, calculating upon a future day when he may be more inclined and more at liberty to reflect on a method of preparation for eternity;—that man’s religion or notions of religion are vain! For he has calculated upon infirmity

to supply spiritual vigour, upon lukewarmness instead of zeal, and upon decline of mental strength to rear up, at the last, that strong fabric of faith and love which requires years of habit and experience to construct and sustain. He may now be in earnest because, perchance, he sees danger before him; he may now become zealous from fear of the punishment which he discovers and perceives to be due to his indifference and neglect. Mercies have been unheeded, blessings have been unacknowledged, privileges disregarded, favour and grace despised and extinguished; he has, therefore, now reduced himself to a state of spiritual destitution, and in his poverty, lies naked with no robe of righteousness to cover him! What, then, is his position now that he has been permitted a longer continuance to make his peace with Heaven? With the Book of Life, at length, opened before him, he may read and be assured that "to whom much has been given, of him will much be required," and that the servant who wrapped his Master's talent in a napkin and applied it to no useful purpose, lost all commendation and reward; and thus his own worldly dealings may teach him this piece of arithmetic,—that if every individual soul is to be rewarded hereafter in proportion to the works done in his body,—(done by his own co-operation with the grace of God,) he who has worked the least will, on this calculation, obtain the least, if any, reward: so that he can have no just ground of reliance upon future

acceptance from the merits of that SAVIOUR Whose example he has disregarded, and Whose precepts, until now, he has undervalued. And thus, at length, it is made evident to him, that he has nothing to balance against the vigorous years of life but the feeble endeavour to work out his salvation in the last days of infirmity and decay, when "the night cometh on and no work can be done."

Now mark the bearing, the character, and feelings of those of Threescore-years-and-ten whose piety and religious conduct, if not always in the morning of life, yet in every subsequent period, have been characterized by prudent conduct and a uniform influence of religion on their hearts,—who, in youth, mingled gaiety with innocence,—in maturity, care with cheerfulness,—the approach of age, with a preparation for its dissolution,—and who in every stage in succession have endeavoured to preserve "a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man." The sense and feeling of religion has made him patient under affront, and temperate yet cheerful in his enjoyments. In adversity he has been humble, but not desponding, because he acknowledged it as his trial, and he had confidence in the mercy of God Who never wantonly inflicts punishments upon the children of men, and chastises, only to produce amendment. In prosperity he has rejoiced, but never presumed upon its being sent as any kind of recompense for supposed merit,—for merit he has none;—but rather to prove his virtue

by affording him greater means of doing good to others, and of manifesting his gratitude to the great Giver of all things. In sickness he has acknowledged the rod and borne the chastisement submissively as due to his sin, and as the trial of his faith. Ever aware of the uncertain tenure of life, he has kept his lamp trimmed and burning, and with oil to replenish it. Knowing by experience and observation the force of evil habits, he has steeled his heart to break the chain before it coiled around him; for he has watched and marked when the torrent had hollowed out its deep bed, how difficult it would have been, if not vain, to have turned its current into another channel; and hence he has gathered the wisdom, that to "eschew evil and to learn to do well," was to check in their first growth every evil inclination, and to set a guard upon the door of his heart, and above all, continually to keep open intercourse with his God. Even in the most common occurrences of life, as well as upon all public occasions of worship, he stedfastly looked up, and mentally fixed his eye upon the Cross of his SAVIOUR, and thus armed, he bravely pursued the path of life, fearing no evil, and bent his course with composure towards that grave which he had regarded as the gate and portal to another and a better world!

To this character few Septuagenarians may venture to lay claim, for though for the greater portion of life they may have kept the picture of it constantly

in view, and may have represented it on many occasions to others, yet with the common frailty of nature, they, doubtless, may not only have failed in many respects, but fallen very far short of its resemblance. Still, from the age of maturity, and from study of human life, they have found, when pondering on the number of their days, and applying their hearts unto religious wisdom, that as those days were extended, kindness took the place of harshness—fearance, of anger—calmness, of irritation—that real or supposed injuries were forgiven and forgotten; and that as here, we can only see “through a glass darkly,” charity has urged excuses for the misconception and errors of others. Thus, as they approach to the verge of the grave, they have, at length, felt themselves disposed to shake hands with the world, and to leave it with the prayer that the blessed influences of the Gospel, to which all these ameliorated and better feelings can alone be ascribed, may prevail to a greater extent beyond the narrow range of their own days. These amended feelings may have been induced by other considerations arising from reflection upon the numerous relatives, friends, and acquaintances that have been called to their account in every season of that life which has been graciously extended to them. They have seen the young and the mature, some not far removed beyond infancy, and others little short of old age, indiscriminately swept away year by year, and that amongst their own contemporaries few there were that remained, and

those few visibly and rapidly drawing to their end. They may, too, have visited after the lapse of many years the place of their birth in the expectation of indulging in a revival of their early associations, but have found all traces of former friends obliterated either by death or the change of circumstances; and that nothing more has been left to recall the fond recollection of the past, than the immoveable landmarks that designate the locality, but leave the sad and mournful feeling that those, whose remembrance is connected with them, are no more. In other cases the bond and cement of a long acquaintance, a confirmed friendship, or the ties of kindred, or affection, have been suddenly broken, which have left the survivors, like shipwrecked vessels, floating on the troubled sea of waters, without the hand to stay, or the power to guide them into the haven of safety. The wife has been deprived of the love and counsel of the husband,—the husband of the solace and affection of the wife,—brothers and sisters have been left to struggle with the difficulties of life, not only before they were able to contend with them, but before they could be possessed of strength or power to meet them. But then, after all, it has been seen in these several circumstances how wonderfully and mercifully the providence of God has intervened, ostensibly to bestow, or imperceptibly to supply relief to the disconsolate who have at other, even happier times, reposed trust and confidence in Divine aid, whence religious hope has been strengthened, and

love unfeigned to GOD and CHRIST more deeply rooted. Yes ; indeed, the aged have often seen, and as often admired and dwelt upon the conduct of those who, neither from acquaintance nor friendship, yet from the motives and dictates of a benevolent heart, have made the sorrows of others their own, lending their worldly and mental means to lessen the sufferings of humanity, and exercising that great gift of Christian charity which in this country is so widely extended—that gift of charity or universal love, the “very bond of peace and of all virtues.”

Besides this ebullition of sympathy, which is the redeeming virtue of the age, has not the Septuagenarian again and again witnessed innumerable instances of filial love? The good daughter administering to the wants and infirmities, or solacing the grief and discomfiture of parents, now upholding the aged father, and now nursing the beloved mother, while in the exercise of their unwearied solicitude and care, the one blesses GOD for such devotion to her, and the other gives way to

“Tears, such as tender fathers shed,  
Upon a duteous daughter’s head ;”

while sons, with no less feeling, exert their strength, their labour, and their pains in manifesting the dutiful affection they bear to objects no less dear to them, nor less beloved.

All these, as they occur, leave upon the minds of the virtuous aged the assurance that, amidst the

troubles and gloom of their earthly pilgrimage, there is a gleam of light occasionally shining in darkness, which, though it can only partially dissipate it, yet serves to show the true but narrow path which leads to heaven; reconciling them to yield such emotions of sorrow as this state have created, for others of joy far greater, and more enduring. They may indeed have witnessed other scenes that have excited most painful reflections, for numberless instances must have been presented to their view, and many more may have reached them by other ways, of those who have wasted their inheritance, their patrimony, and the wealth, confided to them by heaven for better purposes than they applied them, and who have died in want and infamy, pampering every vicious inclination and refusing all cultivation of the mind. And of others, patterns of moral conduct, who "rose early and late took rest, eating the bread of carefulness," in order to raise fortunes and establish families, who were kind and hospitable, generous, free, and charitable; beloved by society and the world at large, whose exemplary characters were highly appreciated, yet, most of whom traded upon moral decencies to the almost exclusion of religious motives. These, in many instances, had assumed the form of religion without any appropriation of its power.

Externally clad in the garb of piety, without nourishment of its warmth within, the works they did, though many and great, not proceeding from the grace and favour of God, were dead and void.



Yet these were not wholly wanting in brotherly love, nor in feelings of humanity ; but, inasmuch as they proceeded not from love of God and God's love to man, they fell short of being pleasing or acceptable to Him. And thus they, who under a sense of pure religion, and the study and pursuit of its Divine influence in their actions, might have shone upon the world as stars in the firmament, disqualified themselves for the reception of graces which would have communicated joys to their life, and given them firmer hopes of heaven,—such as would have cheered them through the gloom of sickness, and dissipated much of the fears of death.

These reflections lead the Septuagenarian to the retrospect of by-gone days, and to the examination of his own state and condition, the result of which is that his thoughts are now almost exclusively devoted to the subject of religion. He ponders again and again on the mercy of Him Who gave His only Son, a sacrifice of propitiation for the sins of the *whole* world ; and upon the infinite goodness of that Son Who voluntarily submitted to suffer death, an ignominious death—in the nature of sinful man, that He might pay with His own blood the price of our ransom from the captivity of Death, and Hell, and thus effect our reconciliation with an offended God ! He now especially delights to dwell on the readiness of our heavenly FATHER to accept this sacrifice of atonement, and reflects that, unworthy as he and every other sinful mortal must be to make direct

supplication or to offer praise to the Throne of grace, that JESUS CHRIST has mercifully accepted the office of Intercessor—the *one* and *only* intercessor between God and man by which we have access to the Almighty.

With the conviction of these truths upon his mind, and with his Bible and Prayer Book in his hands, he holds constant intercourse with Heaven, and the nearer and nearer he approaches his end, the more he contemplates the subject of Death, and prepares himself for his final departure. And though pains should wrack his body, infirmity weaken him ; and though he feels that he may become an incumbrance to others and a burden to himself, he relaxes in no duty that he can discharge, nor in any attempt to benefit others, however futile his endeavours may prove ; because he has always felt strongly assured that no man can know what has been the object of the CREATOR in His creation of him, and that however insignificant he may think himself to be,—however unimportant he may deem his existence with respect to his family, his friends, or the world ; yet he is confident that as the ALMIGHTY has done nothing in vain, it would be impious in him to make the part assigned him void by his own impatience or caprice. For, he cannot possibly know whether he may not be a wheel, however small, in the work of the great Artificer,—a wheel!—no,—the invisible infinitesimal tooth of an infinitesimal wheel, necessary to the perfect construction and

movement of the machine, in which he is graciously permitted to make an infinitesimal invisible particle. For such is the inscrutable perfection of the Works of God, that whether infinite in magnitude or diminution, His omnipotence and omniscience are the same,—whether the object be the sun itself, or the animalculæ of the microscope,—whether it be the formation of a world or the worm, man, within it,—nothing He has created is created in vain or destitute of its perfection. Even Cicero, who upheld the system of Pythagoras in believing the human soul to be a detached portion, or emanation from the great Universal Soul of the world, held with that philosopher, that none could quit the post of life without the authority of the Supreme Being. Indeed, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and other enlightened philosophers and moralists considered the too common practice of suicide among them as rebellion of the creature against the power that gave him life, and which placed him in it for such an end and purpose as the same power should alone determine. Brutus, who married the daughter of Cato, and Cassius, who had married the daughter of Brutus, both committed suicide; and it is affirmed that Brutus and Cassius were killed with the same swords with which they had themselves killed Cæsar; and here we see an almost supernatural retribution.

Virgil, in his description of Tartarus, (the region of wicked spirits) places the suicides on the left hand side of it, and represents them as suffering due

punishment for their want of piety and virtue to support them against the pressure of misfortune.

“ Oh, with what joy the wretches now would bear  
Pain, toil, and woe, to breathe the vital air.”

Seneca also, speaks very powerfully and wisely to the same point in his epistle to Lucilius,—“ The man who delivers himself up to the Supreme Being with an implicit and unreserved resignation, has the mark of a truly great soul, as it is of a base and little mind, to entertain unworthy suspicions of the order established in the world, or to attempt to break through the laws of Providence, and instead of correcting his own ways, impiously presume to correct the ways of God.”<sup>1</sup> This was a noble sentiment from a great heathen philosopher, and is well deserving of record. Not such was the conduct of Cato, although a philosopher of higher repute in his day; for after he had read Plato’s treatise on the “ Immortality of the soul,” thought himself justified in killing himself rather than fall into the hands of his conqueror; for although death, and a cruel death awaited him, it would have been as magnanimous in him as a heathen, as it would be piety in a Christian to have endured the trial rather than to have committed the abhorrent deed.

Impressed with reflections such as these, the man of threescore-years-and-ten proceeds onward in the path which leads him further to meditate upon his

<sup>1</sup> Seneca’s Epis. 107.

near approach to "that bourne whence no traveller returns," and prepares himself for the termination of it, not with presumption, but with confidence, upholding in meekness the hope that as soon as his body shall go down to the grave, and to the dust from whence it sprung, his soul, by his SAVIOUR's merits, and by His mediation, may ascend to God Who gave it.

Still, as long as life and health continue, he, first discharging his religious duties, turns many a leisure hour to the pursuit of other objects,—to literature and outward subjects of contemplation; for though increase of years will produce a decrease of bodily strength, such do not necessarily produce a corresponding weakness of intellect. We have frequently been made acquainted with the most astonishing proofs of the truth of this remark, though there are not wanting other lesser instances of the same, showing the vigour of the spirit above that of the flesh.

Cicero, in his treatise on old age, observes, "that the mind may be sustained to any period however far it may be extended, provided a man be capable of performing those offices which are suitable to the season of his advancing life, and preserves at the same time indifference as to its continuance. Old age, (he adds,) under these circumstances, and with these feelings may be animated with more courage and fortitude than is usually found in the prime of life."

Preserving his cheerfulness, the Septuagenarian,

if sojourning in the country, walks abroad and interests his mind with everything that happens to meet him. He hears the joyous noise of children liberated from the confinement of school, all clamouring at the top of their voices at the same time, and then going off in groups to their several games, where sounds of clamour and tumult further prevail. Still he stands a spectator of the scene and studies the character of each, and then passes onward to make comments to himself. He now reaches the village churchyard, where he ponders upon his previous scenes of life, and revives the remembrance of some that were pleasing, and of others that were sorrowful; and while for these he grieves, he prays for spiritual aid to strengthen and confirm his future resolutions. He here lingers, and lingering, reads the memorials of the dead. He contemplates in imagination the course and path which each amongst the departed may have trodden; while in many instances of character on which he conjectures, he thinks he sees in the terms which their successors have expressed, an extravagant commendation of the virtues of the dead which would not have been conceded to them if living. But, perchance, the ground for this conjecture is to be ascribed, chiefly, if not wholly, to the stonemason, to whom the office of rural chronicler is most commonly left: for, yonder he sees in the distance, a widow leaning upon a head-stone, and pouring her tears over the grave of her husband, while her

smiling child gathers in playfulness the wild flower that grows upon it, unconscious of its mother's sorrow, or the loss which itself will one day feel and lament. She comes to sooth her anguish by dedicating her tears to the memory of the departed, and almost fancies that his spirit hovering over the spot, is cognisant of the tribute she pays. At another time he has seen beneath the emblematic shade of the yew-tree a female walking to and fro near to a newly-formed mould of earth covering the remains of a fond parent. She thinks of him as if he were reposing in his bed, and there quietly slumbering ; and she gratefully thanks him for the love he bore her while living, and for the pledge of it in the provision which he has made for her, now dead ! He has, also, witnessed another, reading and contemplating the records inscribed on the various stones, many of which convey mistaken views of the future state ; some mixed with short Scriptural truths, and more with worldly deadness ; and others, alas, marked with expressions of vulgar and offensive familiarity. It is this that excites distress in the minds of the religious and devout, when they so constantly see inscriptions in every churchyard referring back to earthly and worldly aspirations rather than forward to those of a spiritual nature. Some of these record the various bodily sufferings of the departed, and how strenuously they struggled against death, having reposed their confidence in human, rather than in Divine aid, and who, like Asa,

“sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.” Others record the resemblance of the vicissitudes of their worldly success to the good or ill fortune of the circumstances of their trade, or to the instruments of their vocation, as in the instance of the Watchmaker :

“ The Sun of Righteousness His radiance threw,  
And kept the *dial* of his brief life true.”

One measures the merits of the deceased by the multitude of his accumulated riches :—“ He died after his return from India, where he had acquired a large fortune.” In another, the survivor has thought to throw glory on his relative by the property he has amassed, and which that survivor inherited :—“ He acquired an ample fortune by the profession of a dentist.”<sup>1</sup> Another expresses grief for the death of a sportsman cut off in the prime of life, and enhances that grief by reflecting that his gun which he has left behind, and his two pointers (whose names are both inscribed) will no longer attend him.<sup>2</sup> What then shall we think of another epitaph said to be in the church of South Mimms, not composed by a thoughtless layman, but by an Abbot of S. Albans, over the remains of Thomas Froswick, Esq., who died A.D. 1448, commemorating the sporting habits of the deceased ? giving him, how-

<sup>1</sup> This memorial may be seen on a tablet on the north wall of the chancel of one of the largest parish churches in the kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> Happily, this inscription is now so far obliterated as to be nearly illegible.



ever, the character of a peace-maker, such as it is, as well as that of a good natured gentlemanly man :

“ Outstretched in earth, here Thomas Froswick lies,  
Who once enjoy'd those blessings wealth supplies ;  
His courteous manners, and his graceful mien,  
His well-ruled house, where plenteous store was seen,  
And all his deeds display'd his gentle birth,  
And like a gentleman he lived on earth ;  
What gentlemen oft love, and oft pursue  
Was his employment and his pleasure too ;  
Wild beasts to hunt,—to urge his falcon's flight,  
And savage foxes, was his great delight ;  
Thus waging war against such beasts of prey,  
He killed them all, or drove them far away ;  
But if his neighbours e'er at strife became,  
His mediation quenched the angry flame.  
Wherefore, may God now give this man so blest,  
The peace and requiem of eternal rest.”

Fortunately this epitaph, the author of “the Church-yard Manual” tells us, is in Latin, and therefore not within the compass of every comprehension ; and it would have been more grateful to have made no allusion to any of these revolting and offensive records, had it not been felt better to expose the repetition of such in all their deformity, in order to excite the disgust they merit, and to protest against the admission of such into our cemeteries. It is, indeed, disgraceful to a Christian country that these inscriptions of folly and profane absurdity should be tolerated, or that our death memorials should bear any other than a simple reference to the name and the title of the departed, accompanied (if at all) only

by such religious sentiments or expressions as may mark the piety that had been manifested, or the example to be imitated.

It has been truly remarked that of the tens of thousands of epitaphs that exist in our country, a few only possess a Christian character. In some of them inscribed upon *tombs* and *cenotaphs*, monuments, implying less means than good sense to be wanting, may be seen in affected terseness, the words "*ULTIMA DOMUS*,"—man's last house! How much better is the sentiment of the suffering Christian :

" Farewell, thou world of grief, farewell,  
Thy thorny paths I've trod,  
Thankful, I quit my mould'ring cell  
To seek a *House* with God."

For, as it was asked in the case of the *Ultima Domus* in the chapel of Goodward, so may it be asked here,

" Did he who edified this wall,  
Not read, or not believe S. Paul ;  
Who says, there is, where'er it stands,  
Another *House*, not made with hands ?"

It is the duty of every clergyman before he gives permission to lay down or place a stone in his churchyard, to know beforehand the inscription proposed for it, that he may prevent the nonsense we too often find exhibited in this way, and to take care, also, that these stones as well as the tablets on the walls of the church, be of moderate dimensions and without flourishes, crying cherubs, and other sculptured excesses.

Indeed, the evil of all this, as well of many other customs of the same nature, arises from want of this previous supervision, and from further want of guarding against the common and egregious error of looking upon the grave as the abiding and exclusive *resting place* of the departed in which they *repose* until the last day, when all may arise to, what all must *hope*, a joyful resurrection. The error has prevailed at all times, and has been inconsiderately followed by men of talent and piety, more from undue caution, or from a mortal clinging to nature, than to the exercise of a scriptural discernment. Gray, in his elegant and beautiful Elegy falls into the same mistake:—

“Beyond those rugged elms, that yew-tree’s shade,  
Where heaves the turf, in many a mould’ring heap,  
Each, in his narrow cell, forgotten laid,  
*The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep !”*

That such memorials, even though embellished with holy texts, (incorrect, ungrammatical, and ill-spelt, as they may be,) should teach, as he thought, the rustic *moralist* how to die, is not more apparent than that they should teach the *religionist* how to live. And yet the false notion that the grave is the couch and the *place of repose* of the departed, runs generally through our cemeteries, and damps the solace of survivors with the dread feeling that those whom they once fondly loved lie in darkness and blackness amongst earth-worms, remote from all spiritual intercourse, unconscious, and insensible,

until the trumpet of the archangel shall summon them to judgment.

Such sentiments pervade the following, and many other epitaphs :—

“ Earthly cavern, to thy keeping,  
We commit our parents’ dust,  
Hold it safely, calmly *sleeping*,  
Till our LORD demands thy trust.”

Some have even intimated that our LORD Himself slept the sleep of death in His tomb :—

“ Dear honoured parents, we must trust,  
Your precious bodies to the tomb ;  
Here in the churchyard’s hallowed dust  
Sleep calmly thro’ night’s transient gloom,

“ So JESUS slept,—God’s only SON,  
Passed thro’ the grave, and blest the bed.  
Sleep as He slept, till from His throne,  
Be heard the call,—‘ Arise, ye dead ! ’ ”

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile these with our LORD’s plain promise to the penitent thief, that on that awful day of crucifixion he should be with Him in paradise ;—that is, that His human soul would be in the place of departed spirits ; and still more difficult would it be to explain how CHRIST “ being put to death, but *quick* in the spirit, by which he preached unto the spirits in prison,” could have so done as the Apostle asserts.

One poet of established celebrity speaks of a departed friend as in the enjoyment “ of *the natural repose of the Tomb*.” Another speaks of those

former great statesmen Pitt and Fox, as "now sleeping side by side, under their marble tombs in Westminster Abbey," thus falling into a threefold error—as to their being in that place *sleeping*,—as to their being therefore *unconscious*,—and as to their being under *marble tombs*. We trust that their spirits are far removed from earth,—that they are not sleeping in an unconscious state,—and we believe that no marble *tombs* cover their ashes, which lie beneath the stone pavement at some little distance from each other, with the plain simple but sufficient inscription (so long as it is legible) of their initials only.

A learned pious "Christian Advocate," now no more, speaking of the ALMIGHTY as being ever the same, and whose years fail not, represents Him "as enduring when the vain questioner and the devout believer shall be no more, and for ages *sleeping together in the dust*." And another elegant writer falls into the same track:—

"What though afflicted children grieve and sigh,  
That one so loved and so rever'd should die;  
Calm resignation clasps the SAVIOUR'S cross,  
And mourns, but does not murmur at the loss.  
*Here may her sacred dust repose in peace,*  
*Till that great day when Time itself shall cease,*  
Her spirit fled, with this, her only plea,  
The SAVIOUR liv'd, the SAVIOUR died for me!"

This excites our regret, and that regret is heightened when we find such men as these, though they have in some instances spoken in this manner, in subsequent works have shown that they did not,

in reality, attach the same meaning to such a style of expression of the deceased as was then understood, and as others have done; and that they themselves spoke only in reference to the body. Yet surely this amounts to no excuse for the use of expressions, which, coming from such minds, ought to have been correct and unequivocal, particularly as the error has been so generally censured by the ablest divines, and has been, to the poor, a ground of belief, and thence a source of consolation altogether false and visionary. How much more true, how much more scriptural, how much more consolatory, are the lines of the poet Rogers:—

“ When by a good man's grave I muse alone,  
Methinks an angel sits upon the stone;  
Like them of old, on that thrice hallow'd night,  
Who sate and watch'd, in raiment heav'nly bright,  
And with a voice inspiring joy and fear,  
Say,—pointing upwards,—that *He is not here*,  
That He is risen :—”

No! we must, indeed, expand our views, and embrace the reality that when we confide the mortal remains of our departed friends to the tomb, we consign their mere dust and ashes to an earthly locality, in the assurance that the spirit that animated them in life, soared at the instant of separation to a place of rest, where in perfect consciousness it mingles in society with the spirits of others who have gone from earth before them. Then when we visit their graves we must look upwards, not downwards;

we must look to the light, and not to darkness, for consolatory reflections upon the place and occupation of their spirits, and instead of such mistaken notions as the following epitaph expresses—

“ Patient, devoted, servant of her God,  
The heavenward path, this humble woman trod,  
To Him she gave, resigning, her calm breath,  
In meek tranquillity, she sunk to death :  
And now life’s trial done, her *sleeping dust* .  
*Awaits the glorious rising of the Just ;*”

we may with greater assurance of truth reflect, that

“ Life is real—Life is earnest  
And the grave is not its goal,  
‘ Dust thou art, to dust returnest,’  
Was not spoken of the soul !”

And, therefore, with still greater assurance we may adopt the consolation and doctrine of the following epitaph :

“ ‘ Absent from body, present with the LORD ;’  
How can it be except that souls survive,  
Each in its place till the Almighty word  
Shall bid their bodies rise, rejoin, and live ?  
Grant, LORD, that this departed soul may stay  
Where shines Thy presence, till that awful day.”

Or, still more explanatory, this :—

“ His pillow, stones—the Earth his bed of rest,  
Visions of angels fill the Patriarch’s dreams !  
The Christian’s sleep is more than Jacob’s blest,  
His Sun is set, the grave his Bethel seems.  
Descending angels close his fading eyes,  
Angels ascending bear him to the skies !”

If then the spirit of the departed has flown on its separation from its earthly tabernacle of clay to other realms, and is there in a state of consciousness,—to speak of the sleep in the grave is an inconsistency; while, on the other hand, the denial of this, and the supposition that the dead lie in their graves until the trump of the Archangel shall give the signal of a reunion of the absent dormant spirit to its former habitation of dust, involves the assumed certainty of the sleep of the soul,—the sleep of that particle of immortality, that breath of life, which God breathed into the nostrils of every mortal body the instant it came into existence, and became “a living soul!”

This is a subject of deep inquiry, and has engaged the attention of the learned at all times, but to enter into their different views and arguments would be a matter both tedious as well as difficult; and if explained, few would be desirous of investigating and following it; and as the Scriptures alone can form the only true basis of development, and thus furnish the surest grounds on which mortals can build their hopes: and as, in all probability, this inexplicitness is designed to show that we are not to seek further express knowledge; and as physiologists have created their notions of the sleep of the soul upon deductions from the physical nature of man, it will be safer for us humbly to search with no other light on the subject than what the Scriptures plainly exhibit, and what reason, founded on the observation of the



common course of *nature* (which is only another term for divine Providence), confirms. Putting aside, therefore, the testimony of the ancient Fathers, Clement, Ignatius, Justin Martyr and others, confirmatory of what we have here adduced; we shall presume upon offering sufficiency of evidence to satisfy the general inquirer that he may regard the notion of the *sleep of the soul* as a perfect fallacy. "That unintelligible and dismal doctrine of a sleep of a soul," (says Bishop Horsley,) "in the interval between death and judgment, is, indeed, nothing more than a soft expression for what the materialists call by its true name—annihilation. Thanks be to GOD! our LORD's explicit promise holds out better prospects to the Christian's hope. Though the happiness of the righteous will not be complete, nor their doom openly declared till the reunion of soul and body at the last day, yet we have our LORD's assurance that the disembodied soul of the believer truly lives,—that it exists in a conscious state, and enjoys the perception at least of its own existence. This is the plain import of our LORD's declaration to Martha,—that whosoever liveth and believeth in Him *shall never die.*"<sup>1</sup> And now, without entering into the consideration whether the soul be a simple, or a compound or an uncompounded essence; or how its motions can operate in connexion, or unconnected with the body, or whether or not it is physically liable to dissolution; let us commence with what is

<sup>1</sup> Serm. xxxii.

only the most evident to our senses, in conjunction with what has the sanction of Holy Writ.

At man's creation, then, we find that God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and by the breath of His mouth, or Spirit, the man became a living soul ! Now, however obscure the writers of the Old Testament may be in reference to a future state of existence, we know that they speak of their ancestors, when they died, as being "gathered to their Fathers ;" which expression implies the belief that their souls had fled to some region beyond the skies, above or below our earth, where they are assembled until the great day of Judgment.

Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of Machpelah, where he himself was interred ; and in this same sepulchre were consigned the remains of Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. So strongly, too, afterwards, was David impressed with the duty of paying this respect to such a practice, that he carefully gathered up the bones of Saul and of his son, more than thirty years after their death, to give them honourable burial. Look throughout the whole world, and amidst every nation, however barbarous and uncivilized, and we see a general notion prevailing that there is attached to the dead body of their friends something of a nature they can neither describe nor understand, but which leads one and all of them to pay some respect to their remains after death ; while they connect with it, something beyond death, reserved for such, as according to their notions,

they deem good and great, though altogether denying it to others, their enemies, whose bodies they destroy.

“ Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind ;  
His soul proud science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk or milky way ;  
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,  
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, a humbler heav'n ;  
Some softer world in depth of woods embrac'd,  
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste.  
To be—contents his natural desire ;  
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire :  
But thinks, admitted to that *distant* sky,  
His faithful dog may bear him company !”

This feeling so general, and with no exception but in those sunk in the lowest grades of ignorance and in the scale of human existence, establishes the fact that nature is everywhere one and the same ; and therefore the sentiment must have been implanted by the inspiration of God alone.

Let us look into the systems of the most enlightened philosophers of Greece and Rome ; foremost amongst whom stands Pythagoras, who flourished about five hundred years before CHRIST, and whose philosophy has ever been considered as approximating to the character of divine. He had visited, and had studied in the most distinguished schools of learning amongst the Eastern nations ; had resided for a considerable time in Egypt, and settled for a period in Magna Græcia, comprehending now the kingdom of Naples. The doctrine taught in these schools, was,

that the soul had an existence prior to its connexion with the body, and this belief seems to have been of the highest antiquity, as it may be traced from the Chaldean, Egyptian, and thence into the Grecian theology, as far back as there are any records of their speculative tenets. It was the belief of Pythagoras that the soul was always a celestial spirit pervading all things, and that it was sent down from above, in divers proportions, into the bodies of men ; but which, upon the death of the body, returned to its original source. Cicero, (as we learn from his treatise on old age) adopting the teaching of this school, near the close of his life declared, the nearer that death advanced upon him, the more clearly was he impressed with the reality of the consequences of dissolution. " I am well convinced," he says, " that my dear departed friends are so far from having ceased to live, that the state they now enjoy, can, alone, with propriety be called *life*. The soul during her confinement within the prison of the body, is doomed by fate to undergo severe penance : for her native seat is in heaven ; and it is with reluctance that she is *forced down* from those celestial mansions into these lower regions, where all is foreign and repugnant to her *divine* nature."

These opinions of Pythagoras were adopted by Socrates, and by him transmitted to his pupil Plato, who, at length, in his religious notions bordered on the confines of Divine revelation. This has been, and in all probability, truly, ascribed to the circumstance,

that the Prophets Jeremiah and Baruch were known to have dwelt in Egypt for many years after the Jewish captivity, with the miserable remnant of that people whom the king of Babylon had left in Judea; and, from conversation with them, or from their traditions, or perhaps, from copies of their original writings, these philosophers might have drawn their amended theology. Pythagoras differed in one respect greatly from others, who concerned themselves in the study of ethics; his turn of mind was upon the investigation of moral science, and pointed to paths which led to present and to future happiness; and though in his system he attached to the human mind propensities common to us with the brute creation, yet he conceived that the most ample and perfect gratification was to be found in the enjoyment of moral and intellectual pursuits and pleasures. Amongst other matters of this nature he enjoined his disciples at the close of every day to take a review of all their actions during the whole of it, to ensure correctness, censure error, and to promote future amendment of life. This practice is highly extolled by Cicero, and equally so by Horace, who not only applied it to its proper use, but recommended it by his own example.

The verses in which this injunction was laid are called "The golden verses of Pythagoras," although composed by his pupil Lysias, the preceptor of Epaminondas, 388 years before CHRIST. It has been well observed by a writer on Cicero's "Treatise on Old

Age," that perhaps there never was a rule of conduct delivered by any *uninspired* moralist which hath so powerful a tendency to promote the interests of virtue as this precept. It is scarcely possible that the man who every night he lays his head upon his pillow, reviews the actions of the day past, and fairly brings them to the tribunal of his conscience, should not rise the next morning with stronger impressions of his social and religious duties, and with a more guarded attention to avoid those moral deviations he has so severely arraigned.

" Nightly forbear to close thine eyes to rest,  
Ere thou hast question'd well thy conscious breast,  
What sacred duty hast thou left undone ?  
What act committed which thou ought'st to shun ?  
And as fair truth or error marks the deed,  
Let sweet applause or sharp reproach succeed.  
So shall thy steps, while this great rule is thine,  
Undevious tread in virtue's path divine."

Xenophon, who was himself a follower of the same school of philosophy, represents the elder Cyrus to have spoken of his soul in this manner: "My sons, do not imagine when death shall have separated me from you that I shall cease to exist. I never could persuade myself that the soul could properly be said to live while it remained in the body; or that it ceased to live when death had dissolved the vital union. I never can believe either that it became void of sense when it escaped from its connexion with senseless matter, or that its intellectual

powers were not enlarged and improved when it was disengaged and refined from all corporeal mixture."

All this constitutes an approach to the truth as revealed to us, but it falls infinitely short of the *whole* truth. Still these expressed sentiments of heathen philosophers whose combined ages far exceeded the average of threescore-years-and-ten, unblest by Divine revelation, but who by the light of nature alone were enabled to make deep inquiries into the constitution of the human mind and body, brought their researches after truth to a sublime termination. They taught, indeed, a high standard of morality, such as led finally to a state of happiness far exceeded by that which they experienced on earth, and which they concluded would be of infinite duration. Such men so impressed with the desire of knowing the things of heaven, their thoughts, their learning, and their writings, are deserving of all consideration; for they show by all these memorials of their existence and labour, that man is born for something beyond a temporary existence, and that following only the laws and the light of nature they experienced the happiest and most consolatory reflections at the close of life. They pondered on the scenes of the past, and upon all that the world offers, and weighed it in the balance with what the experienced reason of their intellects promised to be so much better. Heathen wisdom could go no further; but, blessed be God! all this is as it were but the first stepping stone to Christian Septuagenarians, whose

feet from infancy being placed upon the first stave of the ladder which extends from earth to heaven, they, in pious contemplation and with the eye of faith, see "the angels of God ascending and descending upon it."

We may now revert to the fact before stated, that the Spirit of God breathed into the nostrils of man at his first formation was none other than the creation of the soul into a new created body.

This union was to attend the living being through all the stages of mortality to a spiritual existence, which, finally, was further to conduct it to an endless continuance of bliss or sorrow, according as the mortal with the gift of spiritual aid, (duly supplicated through a life of probation,) had qualified itself for mercy, or by neglect of such gift had subjected it to punishment. The philosophers of old had only promised themselves, and others of great actions and high blown bearing, a mere admission after death to an endless existence amongst former friends and relatives to a sort of paradise, where each would be received in a manner proportionate to their earthly success and glory; and, from their entrance into this, they considered life truly and really to commence.

"My mind," says Cicero, "by I know not what impulse, was ever raising its views into future ages, strongly persuaded that I should then only begin to live, when I ceased to live in the present world, for the desire of immortal glory is the passion which



ever exerts itself with the greatest vigour in the noblest and most exalted bosom." And thus in *Elysium*, (the place of departed good spirits,) the heathens conceived their happiness after life to consist in the reunion of virtuous connexions formed in the world, and holding converse with the great and noble, so made by their supposed glorious deeds :—

" Patriots who perish'd for their country's right,  
Or nobly triumph'd in the field of fight ;  
There holy priests and sacred poets stood,  
Who sung with all the raptures of a God,  
Worthies, whose life by useful arts refin'd,  
With those who leave a deathless name behind,  
Friends of the world, and fathers of mankind !"

With respect to the *place* of departed spirits, the people of every nation before the coming of CHRIST, entertained a variety of opinions, but the most enlightened amongst them seem to have held a general coincidence. History shows, and we now see, how that the Egyptians embalmed the bodies of their dead from the desire of retaining them, as it were, in a state of readiness for their reunion at a future period with the departed spirits reserved elsewhere ; and this practice, where it prevailed, was probably adopted by all other people from a similar motive.

The Hebrews, as Josephus informs us, gave to this place of departed spirits the name of "*Hades*," to which they conceived there were two entrances, the one on the right hand opening into the region of light, to which the souls of the good were con-

ducted by angels to the society of the blest, (called by them "Abraham's bosom"); the other through which the souls of the bad were dragged into "darkness visible," immersed now in cold vapour, and now in fire, with an intervening chaotic gulph impassable. To this place of wretchedness and woe where is "gnashing of teeth," Milton alludes, when he says,—

"Beyond this flood, a *frozen* continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind and dire hail——  
—— the parching air  
Burns froze, and *cold performs the effect of fire*;  
Thither by harpy-footed furies haled,  
At certain revolutions all the damned  
Are brought; and feel by *turns* the bitter change  
Of fierce *extremes*, extremes by change more fierce  
From beds of *raging fire*, to starve in *ice*.  
—— and then to pine  
Immoveably infix'd, and frozen, round  
Periods of time; thence turn'd back to *fire*."

It was into this Hades, this receptacle of all departed spirits, penitent and impenitent before death, where they were reserved in subordinate comparative peace or woe, that CHRIST descended, in order that He might appear both alive and dead, as perfect man; and to the effect that the souls of believers in Him are kept from the torments which abide in that region. For as the grave or hell had no power over Him, "the Head," so neither shall it have any power over "the members." By this descent of

CHRIST, therefore, He freed us from all fear, and by His resurrection and ascension He has secured our hope, and thus "through death destroyed He him that hath the power of death,—that is, the devil."

This place, Hades, is represented as separated into the two divisions alluded to;—the good in one part, the evil in the other, and in the manner which the Evangelist in the parable of Dives and Lazarus appears to give; affording the best explanation that we have the means of conceiving, and indeed, all that we ought to require; it being evident that it is the region into which the soul of every mortal departs, and will remain until the resurrection at the last day. The good are there reserved in a present state of happiness and peace, contemplating admission to that final state and place of bliss promised to the faithful believer and well-doer; the bad in the other region, in a state of painful remorse awaiting the awful sentence of final condemnation. Great is the error of those who represent that at the time of death, the souls of both the good and evil alike, are sentenced to their *final* destination, and that these are at once admitted to the joys of heaven, or to the depths below; for this would render the solemnities of CHRIST's tribunal which are so clearly and vividly set forth in Scripture, as altogether nugatory, and would involve also the absurdity that we are destined to undergo the sentence of bliss or of agony, and afterwards be brought to trial; an inconsistency too palpable for rational belief.

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It appears, then, that the Sages of the civilized world, from the earliest period until the coming of CHRIST, entertained the belief that the soul of the patriot, the warrior, and the statesman, at the time of death did not become extinct, but that it then took its invisible flight to some place of pleasure and retirement far removed from the evil. "The souls of the righteous," says Solomon, "are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them, and though in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction, yet they are in peace." But a greater than Solomon has, since his days, happily appeared, and has put the notion of the sleep of the soul beyond all doubt, by a single declaration, which even if taken alone, is enough to determine any question on the subject. "God spake to Moses," says our SAVIOUR, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.—He is not the God of the *dead*, but of the living, for all live unto Him." From this plain declaration of our LORD, the most ancient Liturgies of the Church have uniformly called Hades, the receptacle of the good deceased, "the region of the living, the bosom of Abraham, and Jacob, and Isaac;" and hence in our Burial Service we are instructed to say—"Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the LORD, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity,"—

when we consign the bodies of the dead to the earth in the *hope* of a resurrection to bliss. And it may be further observed, that when our LORD adduced the case of the existing, though dead, Patriarchs, in answer to the denial of the Sadducees of a resurrection, He did so in refutation of their peculiar doctrine,—that there was no resurrection whatever, no life after the present,—in short, that they believed death to be the end of all things. Well, then, may we appreciate the words and example of our LORD expiring on the Cross, when He gave up the ghost, and said,—“FATHER, into Thy hands I commend My spirit;” and well may we, also, approve the manner in which S. Stephen, following his Master’s precious example, with his last breath, exclaimed:—LORD JESUS, receive my spirit! These are the reflections that continually recur to the minds of those who have reached the threescore-years-and-ten. Serious as they may be thought and gloomy, they constitute the consolation of all who are treading on the confines of their grave. Sad and mournful as these things may appear to the young and vigorous, to the gay and healthy, they are sources of consolation to the sick at any period of life, while to those bowed down by age they are renovation of strength to their minds and of joy to their hearts.

It may be asked by the thoughtless or unbelieving, how any one in the enjoyment of health and strength can be continually throwing a damp upon his heart by meditating only on the last stage of life? If,

indeed, we were gloomily to entertain this subject of death to the exclusion of all other contemplations, we might at length bring ourselves to a state of selfish stupidity akin to morbid insensibility ; but the wise well know that it is impossible to ruminate upon one only subject for any length of time to the exclusion of any other, to any ultimate good purpose ; —that it is a very different thing to strike upon one note of an instrument perpetually, and to blend it in harmony with others. Equally well they know that though cheerfulness is ever desirable, that to be gay and brilliant at all times becomes at length insufferable ; and that light and noisy companions are more intolerable than the dullest well-written treatise on the most momentous subject, and hence that it is our wisdom, as it is for our satisfaction and comfort, to combine cheerfulness with meditation, composure with forethought, and forethought with preparation ; for by the combination of these qualities we may cast a serenity over our further existence here, and become placid, communicative, and exemplary ; encouraging others to become what we would mostly desire ourselves to be :—religious without enthusiasm, pious without hypocrisy, and charitable without ostentation, so uniting Christian faith with Christian love, that whether we live or whether we die, we may die unto sin or live unto righteousness.

On the strength of this reflection, we may revert again to the subject of Hades. What consolation may be gathered at the approach of dissolution, in-

deed, at all other times, from the Apostle's assurance, clearly understood, that "whilst we are at home with the body, we are absent from the LORD; for we walk by faith and not by sight: we may therefore be confident," he tells us, "and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the LORD."<sup>1</sup> This, to many, appears a difficulty, if not a contradiction, which, however, are removed by explaining the same in other words. Thus,—the *faithful*, when they depart this life, are then present with the LORD, in the sense, that whilst they were alive they did not then so nearly enjoy CHRIST as they now do when absent from their bodies, or in death.

Thus, then, the notion of the sleep of the soul is again proved by these several arguments as a delusion, and happily so, for the error is one of great danger, as it would deprive religion of a very powerful motive. It has, in all probability, arisen from the circumstance that death is often depicted under the image of *sleep*. Dead persons are, in Scripture, often said to be *fallen asleep*. We read, also, "that they which sleep in JESUS will God bring with Him." But if we will consult the passages in which the word *sleep* thus occurs, we shall find it so introduced in reference to the body only and not to the soul.<sup>2</sup>

We will now leave this subject of sleep to consider the state of the body after death and consigned to the grave; and here immediately occurs the in-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Dan. xii. 2; S. Matt. xxvii. 52; Acts xiii. 36, 37.

quiry and the questions, so nobly answered by S. Paul. "How are the dead raised up?" With what body do they come? Are the same particles of matter which crumble into dust, and may be dissipated by a thousand different modes—are they brought together again, although, perhaps mingled with every species of animal and vegetable life,—remanded back to the same body at the general resurrection? If not, how can the *same* body be raised—with what body will *they* (the dead) come? S. Paul says, the seed sown in the earth there dissolves, where its structure is destroyed, and that a plant springs up from an imperceptible and unknown principle in it formed and nourished from the earth, the rain, and the atmosphere; and thus, as our blessed Lord emphatically shows,—“except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Now, it is not a *plant* that is sown, but a *seed*, and there is raised from a principle within it, not the same thing that was sown, but a *plant*, which is very different. “Thou sowest not that *body* that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God *giveth* it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its own body.”

But it has been asked,—How the same body which has been committed, when dead, to the earth, and worms have destroyed it;—how, at the last day can every particle of it be raised and start into life upon its re-union with its spirit; for, in the interval, it



may have undergone many changes, it may have passed from the destroying worm into the vegetable, and from the vegetable into other parts, so as to become portions of other bodies taking place of such as they have usurped. How then are we to believe that the particles of matter which constituted the body when living, can be collected together and re-formed into the same living being again? The answer to this question is this:—that a mystery unintelligible to us, may be received as a certainty by an explicit declaration of it in Scripture; and this, like all other mysteries, is to be accepted by us on the same evidence that we receive all others revealed in Holy Writ. Nothing is impossible with God. Our belief on such points cannot be founded on the evidence of our faculties, for no human faculty can fathom such deep things. Still we know that omnipotence can cause “the parts of the body of man, though dissolved, not to perish; they lose not their entity when they part with their relation to humanity; they are laid up in secret places, and lodged in the chambers of nature, and it is no more a contradiction that they should become the parts of the same body of man to which they did belong, than that after his death they should become the parts of any other body, as we see they do. Howsoever they are scattered, or wheresoever lodged, they are within the knowledge and power of God, and can have no repugnancy by their separation to be re-united when and how He pleaseth. The first dust of which man

was made, was as far from being flesh as any ashes now, or dust can be; it was only an omnipotent power which could mould that into a human body, and breathe into the nostrils the breath of life. The same power, therefore, which must always be, can still make of the dust returning from the bodies of men unto the earth, human bones and flesh, as well as of the dust which first came from the earth; for, if it be not easier, it is most certainly as easy, to make that to be again which once hath been, as to make that to be, which before was not; when there was no man, God made him of the earth, and therefore, when he returns to the earth, the same God can make him man again.”<sup>1</sup>

Much of the difficulty in our attempted conception of all this arises from the perplexity in our minds, as to how the same particles of the dead body can be constituted again into the *same person*; thus involving ourselves in the mazes of *personal identity*, from which we are not extricated even by the author of the “Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion;” when he alleges, that “the consciousness, or the perception of our existence in a living being, constitutes personal identity, and is the same whether the soul or spirit be in the body or out of it;” an argument that has the effect of mystifying an *intuitive* perception, in an attempt to make it a *philosophical* one.<sup>2</sup> But no man living can doubt that he was the same

<sup>1</sup> Pearson on the Creed.

<sup>2</sup> Bp. Butler on Future Life.—P. 21.

man yesterday that he is to-day. The connexion between the corpse and the risen body is fully explained by what we have now adduced from S. Paul's illustration from the growth of the plant.

In all seeds, a considerable part turns into dust, but there is one part which never decays—the *radicale*—and from this part the plant springs; this radicale secures the connexion between death and vitality, and thus, “every seed has its *own* body, and every plant, its *own* seed.” What the undecaying part is, we know not, whether a nerve or vein, but upon the authority of Scripture we know that the connexion between the buried body and the risen is still undissolved. The rest of the human frame may turn into clay or vapour, or may belong to a thousand vegetables, and from them pass into a thousand human bodies, and yet the original connexion, by the *radicale*, be preserved.

But, after all, without entering into mysteries, or abtruse reasonings on personal identity; we have the full assurance that at the last day, the dead will be raised;—and without the admission of any time for asking the question,—“but with what body shall they come?” S. Paul tells us, at once, that our bodies *shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, at the sound of the trump.

They, then, who have died in the faith of CHRIST will, at the last day, be raised with bodies which they shall then *feel* to be their own, and will, therefore, *be* their own; but which will be far different from the

earthly tents or tabernacles of flesh and blood in which they sojourned here on earth, when they will be made like unto the glorious body of CHRIST, for, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

In Hades, the faithful and well-doers in CHRIST have all the enjoyment which the society of the spirits of the good can confer, while the expectation of what greater bliss is still in store, will occupy their contemplations until the great day of the LORD shall come. That the contemplations of some may refer back to those things of which these spirits were cognizant when in the body, is conceivable from the remorse which Dives is represented to have experienced when he reflected on the state and condition of his five brethren whom he had left behind; but then this bitter remorse and reflection was in him a portion of punishment,—the consciousness of the effect and example of his own wickedness.

The case differs widely from those who "die in the faith of CHRIST," whose spirits occupy the peaceful abodes of Hades, who are, in all probability, far removed from any sorrowful reflections of an earthly kind. No, indeed, they are absorbed in heavenly contemplations on the power, the wisdom, the mercy and attributes of the ALMIGHTY, upon nothing whatever of a terrestrial character. And as in these peaceful and contemplative regions they are thus occupied in such blissful meditations; even, if they were cognizant of any earthly matters referring to

whatever might have been good in their conduct and examples, under the grace of God, while in the flesh ; or were capable of taking pleasure in the knowledge of their effect upon those on earth ; grateful as the indulgence of such a notion may be deemed to our present views and wishes, yet it may only be a mere pleasurable, perchance, groundless fancy of our mortal minds, that such, in any degree should contribute to their peace and constitute their serenity. But to conceive, with the Romanist, that this place, Hades, is one court, as it were, to Paradise, in which all souls indiscriminately are carried for ages of torture before admission to the Paradise beyond ; or that when purified and admitted to this happier abode, that even the very best of them can then and there be actually possessed of omniscience and omnipotence, the attributes of the ALMIGHTY Himself, so that they can hear, and know, and help mortals crying and supplicating their aid at all times, and that from every place under the canopy of heaven, is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural.

To assign the powers and the prerogative of God to any mortal man beyond the very narrow limits which He, in His Holy Word, has clearly and expressly defined, is a most unwarrantable conceit ; but to ascribe His attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, in any degree, to the spirits of departed mortals, who have not yet entered into the realms and presence of **JEHOVAH**, nor can possibly be so admitted until after the final day of Judgment, is

presumptuous blasphemy. That holy men, the best and greatest of saints, who have not yet had, nor can receive, the final sentence of the blessed—"Enter ye into the kingdom of My FATHER prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and therefore have not yet approached the throne of the Most High—that such should be supposed able to hear the prayers of mortals, and of granting their requests, by adding their entreaties to those whom they have left behind, even if they had known them, and to those born, or to be born, since their departure hence;—all this appears to us to be the creation of imagination, and if deducible from ancient and vague tradition, has no ground whatever of Holy Scripture upon which it can by any possibility rest. It goes the length of upholding other mediators—Divine mediators in rivalry to that *only One* whom God Himself has graciously and exclusively assigned to us—one in whom while here on earth the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, and who having taken our nature upon Him alone knows and has experienced all the infirmities of humanity, and is our own and only eternal High Priest and Advocate, in realms far, far above those of departed spirits.

And no less untenable and erroneous is the newly developed article of the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin, in the Creed of the Romish Church, and the bold assumption of the pontifical fiat to exalt the humble Mary to divinity,—her whom all nations are indeed for ever to hold *blessed*,

and whose memory is as imperishable as the Gospel—Mary, ever meek, submissive, unpresuming, who herself would be first to repudiate the superstitious divine veneration and worship which has hitherto been unduly and unavailingly paid to her, and to whom Romanists ascribe power which neither she nor the Apostles, inspired as they were, ever claimed,—power such as belongs only to God, and which if she were now living she would assuredly disclaim as derogatory to Him who is *her Redeemer, her SAVIOUR, and her God*. O how worse than idle and profane it is to rear up doctrines founded on legends invented by men, in preference to deriving them from the only source of Divine truth—instead of allowing the authority of God's own and blessed Word to supersede all human fancies and traditions.

Superstitiously, also, do the Romanists persist in displacing Scripture altogether in their invention of Hades, as a place of *purgatory*, to which *all* souls of the departed are assigned to undergo a fiery punishment, which is to cleanse and *purify* them before their admittance into heaven, and in which *all* must for ages endure direful torment; unless, indeed, their surviving friends can purchase some few thousand years of remission. Or, as in the happy case of those who, in the year 1500, were so eminently fortunate as to obtain for themselves and friends, from Pope Alexander IV. "Bulls,"—the one running in these agreeable terms:—"We absolutely command the angels that they place their souls in paradise,

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entirely exempt from purgatory ;"—the other, "Our pleasure is, that the pains of hell do not afflict them in any wise."<sup>1</sup>

Now if the Romish Church and the Pope be possessed of such powers as to enable them thus, or in any other degree, to quench so easily the purgatorial fires of those who have *passed* their earthly probation, could we not wish that out of Christian love and charity they would extend the same advantage to *all* of their own creed who are gone before, if their prayers and masses will obtain the boon ; and not restrict it to the spirits whom only *they* humanly *deem* deserving ? For of the souls in their supposed purgatory they know not what evil, mitigated by subsequent repentance before death, and accepted by God, had not ameliorated their condition, so that of those whom they pretend to release or liberate they may have selected the most wicked in preference to the good ! Oh ! how lamentable is the presumption arising from assuming to be wise beyond what is written,—written by the undisputed inspiration of God !

Happily for us, members of the Church of our forefathers, "we have not so learned CHRIST," but have founded our belief on the sole testimony of Holy Writ, and its doctrines, as uniformly conveyed to us from the apostolic ages. Hence it is that we derive the assurance that each individual soul at its departure from the body takes its flight to Hades,

<sup>1</sup> Greve's Life of Wolsey, I. p. 258.



conducted by an invisible power, and placed either to the right hand, or to the left hand portion of that region, as the ALMIGHTY in His wisdom determines. There (again and again we repeat it) it will abide in a state of happy or woeful consciousness until the great day of the LORD, when each soul united to a changed and unfleshy body, a body incorruptible and immortal, will be summoned to attend the tribunal of CHRIST; after which another and a final separation to the right hand, or to the left, will be made, destined to lead the one to realms of glory, the other to the regions of unmitigated woe! This is of all reflections the most awful, and would be of intolerable anguish, were there not *One* mighty to save, whose mediation, accepted for His sacrifice of atonement, will avail on behalf of all such as have unfeignedly loved Him, and put their faith and trust in Him. May their number increase hour by hour an hundredfold, and ultimately become incalculable as the stars in heaven and the sand upon the sea-shore!

The reflective man of threescore-years-and-ten has impressed this picture in unfading colours upon his mind; he never loses sight of it for any length of time, sleeping or waking. Sitting or walking it is ever in some degree present to him, not engendering thoughts of dread, but serious and deeply interesting fears mingled with joyful hope. He blends it with all he says, and with all he does, for it is the moving spring of every act of mind and body. Still, with

these feelings and sentiments he occupies many a leisure hour in the perusal of works illustrating the history of civilized nations of the world in all ages, tracing the causes of their rise and fall. He studies the characters of the most illustrious men that governed them, and marks in what they excelled and in what they failed; their customs and manners, too, are made subjects of comparison one with another, and with the similarity or dissimilarity of our own. He fails not to see the finger of God in all; how His providence invisibly has presided over their councils and deliberations, and how, indeed, nothing has been effected but by His wisdom and mercy, however inscrutable; and how that He has from all eternity, ordained the establishment, duration, and termination of them for the accomplishment of His great designs. And thus from the earliest to the latest times He has raised up characters, kings, princes, legislators, and others, as instruments in His hands, for the government of the nations; setting up one and putting down another, as His vengeance or His goodness may direct: and all this in the slow, gradual, but perfect preparation for the last dispensation of His will to man,—that Will which CHRIST the MESSIAH, in the fulness of time was to proclaim, and has since published.

We may remark, also, with what strict impartiality the Almighty has ever dealt with mankind. He has dispensed courage, fortitude, profound policy, skill in government, and other great endowments, suited to

the manners and times of each civilized nation and people, as we find marked in the conduct of the great men in all the ages that have gone before us. The inventive genius of men seems, also, from the earliest to the present times to have slowly indeed, but to have been gradually developing, reaching at each step considerable space; and, in all probability, will still go on increasing even with a greater progress, keeping pace with the increasing energies of the mind, until,—who knows?—a check may come;—when our national and individual sins, our pride, our luxuries, our sad evasion of national and individual means to stop the current of the vice; the ignorance, and the wickedness of the people, may lead God to look down upon our country, and seeing it corrupt and filled with violence, to doom its fall! The cry of it may thus become great, and because of sin, very grievous; He may come down to see whether it be ripe for destruction, when it will be well that there may be many Abrahams imploring Him to save it, not for the comparatively few righteous that may be found it, but for the sake of His own, only, and dear Son, Who “came not on earth to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” May we all draw daily closer and closer unto Him in all faith, love and confidence; so that He gathering us together under His wing, and keeping us by the vitality and fervour of His protecting grace, may say:—“I will not leave nor forsake you,—turn unto Me and be saved,—I will still come, and, with My FATHER, will make our

abode with you,—ye shall not be left desolate !” But,—we must constantly bear in mind that the branch must abide in the Vine that it may bear fruit, and if it do not bear fruit, it *must* be cut off and left to wither !

Whenever nations or people have arrived at the height of civilization in the heathen world, the arts and sciences have taken a high and proud position. Science founded on speculative truth, human conjecture, and on natural, unassisted reason, has sometimes approached the sublime, at other times has fallen into absurdity. Natural talent was great and struggled hard, but it could not soar beyond the clouds ; there were scintillations of fire, but great darkness. The Lamp required a reservation of oil to keep it burning. There was wanting what could not be obtained ;—light from a heavenly source,—the light of Revelation ! With respect to works of Art, human genius, ever the same at all times under civilization, rose gradually higher and higher ; and by practice, excited by the reward of approval, admiration and rivalry, attained to a perfection unrivalled, either in design or execution, beyond much of the present day.

And yet we have not been, nor are behindhand in other respects. The rapid advancement of skill and ingenuity within the last thirty years has been prodigiously great, greater, perhaps, than in the whole of the preceding century. Our insular situation, our vast territorial possessions, our intercourse with

the nations of the world, our command upon the seas, have given us advantages over other nations. In commerce, in our prodigies of steam on the surface of the earth and below it,—on the ocean and its depths beneath,—in the application of electricity : in the instantaneous conveyance of language from one part of the world to the other, from the wonderful application of the mechanical powers ; in our rapid locomotive transitions,—all these proceeding, under divine Providence, from the marvellous development of genius and intellectual energy, great as they indisputably are, may yet extend further with the further progress of time. But it must be borne in mind that this development, so conspicuous, is connected only with material objects : it brings within our reach the convenience, the comfort, and the luxuries of life,—and it effects even more than this, for it has produced discoveries in chemistry, medicine, and the structure of the body by which painful sufferings are alleviated, and life itself, under the blessing of God, is thereby made easier, and so, in many respects, is thereby of longer duration.

With respect to the manifestation of intellectual progress in early times, look at Egypt, the country well known to us, as connected with the series of miracles which God wrought by the hand of Moses, when the Israelites, the favoured people of Heaven, were there in bondage ! Its history lives in our Bibles and in our memories, and now that its proximity is brought closer to us by an easy and

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rapid communication, she has become a place of general interest and resort. Her Pyramids, her Temples, Sphinxes, and Columns have long been graphically exhibited and made known to us, as the oldest monuments in the world of man's device and construction. They tell in characters, not to be misunderstood nor obliterated, of her several dynasties and people ; in the early number of which, kings of Memphis are alleged to have built the pyramids of Gizeh. These works tell, also, of the height to which the physical sciences had attained, and a proof of the extraordinary powers they possessed from such knowledge, may be gathered by our ignorance of the mechanical operations by which they were enabled to cut, to carry away, and to elevate such entire masses of stone as their mighty buildings exhibit, which, in some instances, are now standing at the astonishing height of four hundred and eighty feet ! Their knowledge of Astronomy was confessedly great. Their sculpture on stone of adamantine hardness, continues its sharpness and beauty to this day ; and the colour of their paintings is still fresh and brilliant ; while their " Cities of the dead " are filled with generations of the inhabitants of the land three thousand years back, embalmed with such inimitable skill, and such knowledge of chemistry, as to render the body, or rather, its trunk, not only incorruptible, but in such a manner as to preserve its full proportion of size, symmetry, and personal likeness ; and withal wrapped in linen of the finest texture and of

the most exquisite workmanship! From what a height have that nation and people fallen!

Let us turn to Assyria! which until these present days, was only known to us by the mention of that empire and its capital of Nineveh in the Old Testament, and by fragments of the works of Strabo and particularly of Diodorus written forty years before CHRIST: but now laid open to the world by the recent discovery of the great City with all its beautiful architecture, conforming so nearly with that of Egypt, and which we find to have presented models in after times adopted, both by Greece and Rome. The fragments that have now been transferred to this country, and the delineations and descriptions which have accompanied them, have enabled artists to model such parts of the ancient buildings, with their sculpture, as to bring close to our homes, representations of the very places whence these fragments have been taken, and the palaces with which they were embellished. By these means we are made acquainted with their lost history, writings, and arts, exciting in our minds wonder, astonishment, and profound interest. At the same time, they are illustrative of the truth of Scripture history, and set forth an example to all the nations of the earth, that those to whom God hath revealed His Will which they either refuse or neglect, He will assuredly uproot and destroy. The City of Nineveh was of immense extent and magnitude, but it had within it, "six-score thousand persons, who could

not discern between their right hand and their left ;” and although God, in His mercy, commissioned His prophet to preach to them the necessity of repentance as the only means of averting His displeasure, and they *did repent* for a time, yet, relapsing into sin, the City was destroyed, the Empire was overthrown, and its place blotted out of the map of the world, until these present days, when its remains reproduced, show to us, and the world at large, what will be the end of all such nations, cities, and people, who having the LORD for their God,—and beyond all this,—having, what they had not,—CHRIST for their SAVIOUR, neglect and despise His grace and favour ; they will become subject to an infliction of still more awful vengeance.

Egypt, Assyria, Nineveh, Babylon, each raised to the height of human power and magnificence, have fallen from their high estate, for corruption and decay was amongst them, and they are gone ! And how has it fared with Greece, and her renowned cities of Sparta, Thebes, Corinth, and others of her great communities in the Peloponnesus, and Sicily, but more particularly with Athens, the most celebrated city of the world, which once justly boasted of giving birth to the greatest number of men renowned for their love of liberty, their humanity, their eloquence, their noble conduct, and military prowess ? They are no more ! they are gone by for ever ! And where is Rome, once the mistress of the world, with her mighty empire extending in the long




period of more than ten centuries over nearly the whole of the then known world? She is now reduced to an ecclesiastical state of very limited extent, protected by the arms of a foreign power. In her former condition she tolerated every description of religion, and within the walls of her great city were more than four hundred temples. In her present condition she admits but of one form and creed, with churches large, numerous, and of unsurpassed splendour; from which goes forth a worship that carries its example and influence, fraught with its fatal errors, over a great portion of the Christian world.

Both Greece and Rome borrowed their exquisite architecture from Egypt and Assyria, and carried physical science and knowledge to the acme of perfection. With them all the greatest philosophers, orators, and legislators, of pagan times have passed from the stage of life. Their great cities are still in ruins, leaving, however, the history of their wars, their manners, customs, and government, together with existing proofs of their marvellous eloquence and poetry, such as the uninspired mind can faintly imitate. They have left, also, standing memorials of art; temples, tombs, and other monuments, of taste and refinement unequalled in any age, many of them marking the localities of memorable events tending only to exhibit, with all previous nations and people before them, the instability of sublunary matters, and the great littleness of all human grandeur!

This ebb and flow, this rise and fall of the civilized countries and people of the world, which characterise each and all of them, from the earliest to the present time, have come on in a tide setting in from the east and progressing gradually towards the west. And those the most remarkable for their fame and glory, for their excellency of arts and arms, their taste, their splendour and magnificence appear, when once raised to their climax, to have first gradually, and then afterwards more rapidly, to have fallen to decay. They were as a succession of beautiful plants, strong, vigorous, and of exquisite blossom, but after a time "they withered away because they lacked moisture;"—that moisture and that nutriment which only the religion of CHRIST, the promised MESSIAH, could have supplied. Yes, indeed, these nations and people, sown upon stony and thorny ground, have sprung up and attained to considerable strength, and made fair promise of coming to perfection, but on a sudden have languished and died away, having no vivifying power to prolong their existence. Their systems of religion were either long-rooted traditions from early times, or were fables of their own invention, and of no endurance. Amongst their votaries the young were brought up under no parental direction, with no settled views or principles as to the worship of the Supreme Being. All being of the world, worldly, each taught that the chief good consisted in their hardihood, courage, or ferocity; and that life was

to be devoted to conflicts with assailants and powerful enemies; and hence, also, that the supposed honour of their country, and their personal glory in achievement of arms; their eloquence in the senate; their acknowledged bravery in battle; the spoil they gained; the triumph decreed to them; were the several rewards at which they were to aim, and that these were to lead them to wealth and to posthumous fame. Yet all this, great as it might be, was in a moment of defeat or of adverse fortune at once forgotten, and not unfrequently, through envy or some other sordid feeling, subjected the brave and gifted to be despoiled of all the fame they had merited, and too often it happened that they fell by the machinations, if not by the hands of those from whom gratitude and good services were due.

Such of them as suffered, or died, in the cause of their country, suffered and died cheerfully, in a satisfactory hope that an eternal happy admission into the elysian fields awaited them; and many, although they had no belief in any such future state of existence, satisfied their minds that the national record of their deeds would, in the admiration of their example by posterity, be an ample recompense for all that they had endured, and, indeed, as the utmost that the life of man was worth. It was this same atheistical sentiment that is said to have predominated in the mind of Buonaparte, when he declared, "With me immortality is the recollection left in the memory of man. That idea prompts to



great actions. It would have been better for a man never to have lived, than not to leave behind him some traces of his existence.”<sup>1</sup>

Oh! how awful, how melancholy are such reflections and all such views! What is valour, what is fame, what is glory, when connected only with human actions and worldly considerations? Mere names or qualities that exist, perish, and are obliterated! But there is a valour and a patient endurance of even the bitter dispensations of heaven; there is a fame in bearing persecution for the sake of CHRIST; and there is glory in the conquest of faith over the world. These virtues never fade, they bud and emit fragrance on earth, to give further bloom and blossom in heaven!

We may see, then, that the constitutions of human society, unless they are based upon the sound principles of religion, can ultimately come to no good end; the leaven of Christianity must pervade the mass in order that the whole may eventually become leavened. No system ever was or ever can be formed for any length of endurance but such as is founded upon the principles of Divine revelation, and, in these days, which is not founded on the principles of the Gospel of CHRIST.

Christianity “is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the head corner-stone;” a system of Divine institution of doctrines, commands, and precepts,

<sup>1</sup> “Bourrienne's Memoirs of Napoleon.”

coming down to us from the direct source of inspiration.

It is not in this or that man to frame systems upon these according as he may persuade or flatter himself to be capable of deducing a better substance of faith than that which has been delivered down to us from the apostolic ages. GOD is a GOD of order, and has enjoined "that all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions," holding "one LORD, one faith, one baptism," and so "making one body in one spirit."

When Elijah was translated to heaven he let fall the mantle with which he had miraculously divided the river Jordan. Elisha, his servant, taking it up attempted to effect the same miracle, and he did perform the very same; this gave him the assurance that he was invested with the authority and influence of his master. Our blessed LORD when He ascended from Mount Olivet invested His servants with His Divine authority and influence, and confirmed the same to them afterwards, on the day of Pentecost.

He also let fall from Him a beautiful mantle, "without seam, and woven from the top throughout," which even the heathen soldiers who crucified Him would not rend. A still more exquisite mantle did He throw over His Church, and which invests His ordained apostolic ministry with His authority to preach His Gospel to all the world,—this is, happily, in safe keeping. The Romanists, indeed, for

some centuries afterwards, and now, would fain trim and adorn it with their meretricious ornaments; while endless schismatics attempt to grasp it that they may in their unlimited latitudinarian judgment tear it into shreds and throw it amidst their scrambling multitudes. But the vesture is still in its perfect and pristine state and beauty, possessing all its power to warm the body and to protect and invigorate the soul of man, and is as incapable of receiving any additional advantage as it is of wanting change or improvement.

No; indeed, the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel are far from requiring the admission of any new development beyond what has accompanied the system of Christianity from its first promulgation. The Almighty is ever the same, "with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of changing;" and CHRIST is "the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever," the laws, the precepts, the commandments and the doctrines of Christianity are immutable, the same from the time of their first publication to the end of the world. S. Paul openly affirmed, that he had "not shunned to declare *all* the counsel of God." There can be no new doctrine, no new development beyond what has been manifested from its commencement, for the religion of the Gospel is immutable. Different men, perhaps, may have different powers and gifts for a clearer explanation of the sense and meaning of obscure passages of Scripture to different minds of different capacities; but the

doctrines and teaching, the precepts and commands, with the motives for receiving and obeying them, are precisely the same. No one is at liberty to add or diminish,—the Word is gone out of the mouth of God to the ends of the world, and is, and was, and ever will continue the same. This Gospel is the last dispensation of the Will of God to man, on which account, S. Paul cautions the Galatians<sup>1</sup> against receiving any other Gospel, under pain of a curse, than that which he delivered; for there were in his days, as in ours, those who followed after fond inventions.

Not only they, then, who have reached the three-score-years-and-ten, but all of every age are equally interested in knowing upon what grounds their hope of a blissful futurity rests. And as the Volume of divine inspiration has been graciously given for the salvation of all men, all men ought to know its value and authority that they may fully appreciate the boon. That Volume contains the only sufficient rule of faith and obedience. It is the Book of life, for the life that now is, and also for the life that is to come, eternal in the Heavens; which latter is only to be obtained in the manner, and by the way, and by the means, which that sacred Book discloses. Life and immortality is therein brought to light, and as it was a lantern to the feet and a light to the paths of Christians in the earliest ages of the Church, so it is now, and will continue to the last. The Almighty has in strict mercy and judgment given it

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 8.

unto us, as unto those for whom it was written by the Evangelists and Apostles under the divine inspiration of the Comforter. As the several writings of that Holy Volume when first collected, were then received by the Church, so has that Volume come down to us; and as its doctrines and teaching were then accepted, so, in the *uniform* sense in which they had been interpreted by the Church in every successive age, undaubed with the untempered mortar of popery, we now receive it. Commentators on its texts, its meaning, and its injunctions have been numberless, but where these differ in any respect from that which has been the uniform, undeviating exposition and teaching of the Church, in every period of time, from the apostolic age, they are to be rejected. This is the only safe and sound basis on which to stand. Papal infallibility on which the Romanists ground the belief and practice of their Church, and pretend as being always present with them, is a vain presumption. Infallibility is the attribute of God, and He has never delegated this to any one on earth, save only to His own beloved Son! The test of catholicity which stands to us in the place of true and positive assurance, as being the nearest, the safest, and the most obvious approach to human conviction in this matter, is that celebrated one of Vincentius of Lerins; namely, "that which has been *everywhere* received by the Church, has *always* existed, and has been declared *by all*."<sup>1</sup> Whereas

<sup>1</sup> Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ad omnibus creditum est,



Romanists have been unable to fix their public tenets among articles of Christian faith, from failure of proof as to the reception of them, *everywhere, always, and by all*. And if Romanists have thus failed in these proofs, infinitely more evident is the failure in the same respect of those sects whose existence dates as from yesterday.

Had the Christian world happily adhered to this test, the sacred Scriptures would not have been perverted and wrested, as they have been, to prop up the conceit of the numerous sects by which we are on all sides surrounded: sects, each moulding a system after their own fancy; some upholding tenets by the most absurd and monstrous perversions of holy texts, contrary to all sense, to all reasoning, and contrary to all former belief:—a perfect chaos of religious feeling and sentiment, such as produces a positive mania, emanating from pride which leads their fancies to distort the Scriptures to bear such a meaning as they put upon them; pretending at the same time that they are impelled by what they term, “a call,” to propagate their extravagances, mistaking

hoc est vere proprię catholicę, quod ipsa vis nominis ratione declarat.

“As for essentials of Faith, the pillars of the earth are not founded more firmly than our belief upon this undoubted rule of Vincentius. Whatsoever we believe as an Article of our Faith, we have for it the testimony and approbation of the whole Christian world of all ages, and therein, the Church of Rome itself. But the Roman Catholics have no *perpetual* and *universal* tradition for their new 12 Articles (13) of Pope Pius.”—*Bramhall on Schism, vol. II., p. 462.*

their enthusiastic feeling for the movement of God's spirit within them.

Still while we protest against the corruptions of the Romish Church, our protestation against them should not lead us into the mistake of denouncing *every* practice which she has retained or *every* ceremony which she has adopted, as erroneous. Much as we love and are attached to the purity of our own, we must also value her Catholic ritual and primitive constitution. We must walk not midway between Lambeth and the Vatican, nor yet between Lambeth and Geneva, but within the limits which our own Church has traced for her children; a path from which fewer good men have strayed, than that into which they have been driven. The older we get, and the more we reflect, we shall find this to be the safest way before us. And, then, how sad is the reflection that with this Book of life in our hands, given for peace on earth and joy in Heaven, it should be so wrested as to produce embittered feelings one towards another, and impede the progress of our pilgrimage to another and better state of existence! Much of the unhappy differences of religious belief and practice amidst the various classes of sectarists arise from the notion that one and all are equally at liberty to interpret the volume of Holy Writ according to their private judgment, taking for their authority what they conceive to be commanded by our LORD when He said,—“Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which

testify of Me ;"—not considering, or not willing to know, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were not written, nor completed till many years after the death of CHRIST ; and that these words conveyed no command, but a desire that those Jews to whom they were addressed, should *diligently search* their Scriptures in order to convince themselves that He, CHRIST, was their promised Messiah. And so, again, when S. Paul remarked that "All Scripture was given by inspiration of God," he spoke with reference to the Old Testament only, and his words correctly rendered are,—“Every writing divinely inspired is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness :” for although the *New* Testament came by the same inspiration as the *Old*, yet it was not, when S. Paul wrote, collected or completed, so that he could allude only to such Scriptures as were then extant.

From all this, how evident is it, that with all the light and all the knowledge that God in His mercy has given us here, the heart and the mind of man are fixed less upon implicitly following them, than upon applying them to their own peculiar views and objects :—

“There is,” observes a deep-thinking Divine of the present day, “a temptation to remove from religion all that is austere, all that is awful, all that is self-denying, all which shocks our sensitiveness, or our taste, or our ways of thinking, or which requires a decided submission of our minds, or is at variance

with our preconceived notions of God and His ways of acting ; all, in a word, that would not be in a Revelation of God, if we were to make it !”

It is the unlimited exercise of private judgment and its natural consequence, dissension, that has operated upon sensitive minds to embrace Romanism ; considering even the errors of Popery preferable to that diversity of religious faith and practice which so many leaders of sects, influenced by their narrow reason, their wild fancies, and their heated feelings, inculcate. It is all this, in conjunction with sectarian pride, flattering them with the deception that they are better expounders of Scripture matters and doctrines than any, or all, the eminent divines of previous times. The current of improvement and discovery is set in, in an opposite direction, and they determine to go with it. These, like the builders of Babel, are heaping up all sorts of incongruous materials to raise a “tower to reach up to heaven ;” bricks for stone ; slime for mortar ; while their language is “confounded and they understand not one another’s speech.” How vastly different is all this from the Christian edifice erected under the great Master-Builder, Who, laying the foundation with the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, with “living stones,” is made *one* Temple of the LORD ; “in Whom all are builded together for an habitation through the Spirit ; holding one body, one spirit, one hope, one LORD, one faith, one bap-

tism, one GOD, and FATHER of all; speaking the truth in love, growing up under CHRIST, the Head; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body."

Who then are they who are labouring to "keep the unity of this body in the bond of peace?"—This is, indeed, a most important question which the supporters of the unlimited exercise of private judgment will find it difficult to answer.

There is, to the mind of the man who has reached the threescore-years-and-ten, nothing more salutary than the reflections on the past, by which to gather such wisdom for the remainder of his days as may show him how good and gracious has God been to him in every period of his life: to lament his failures in not turning to advantage those concerns of his soul which were, once, within his reach; and to feel that what pleasures of existence may yet be granted to him will arise from doing all the good of which he is capable; cheerfully supporting his mind as he proceeds further down the vale of years, with the bread from heaven, and the living waters from the Christian fount; whilst he is further incited to manifest kindness to every human being, and especially to such as he may at any time have aggrieved; to offer consolation to those in sorrow,—to restrain the turbulent passions of the sinful,—encourage the desponding, and to administer the effects of his expe-

rience for the benefit and enjoyment of all with whom he converses.

Such are the feelings, and such the line of conduct prompted by the religion of the Gospel, and adopted by the aged Christian, who, from its influence on his heart, is ever ready to do good to all within his reach and means; and in this respect he differs widely from those to whom justly, or unjustly, are attributed narrow and selfish motives springing from the natural acerbities, said to be incident to those far advanced in life. For these, or such as these Cicero makes a charitable defence:—"I shall be told," he says, "that if we look into the world, we shall find that petulance, moroseness, and even avarice itself, are infirmities which generally break out and discover themselves in old age. But the truth is, these moral diseases of the mind are rather constitutional imperfections of the man in whom they reside, than necessary defects inseparable from the wane of life. Indeed, this peevishness of temper may, I will not say be justified, but certainly at least in some measure excused from that suspicion which old men are apt to entertain of their being generally marked by the younger part of the world as objects of their scorn or derision. Add to this, that when the constitution is broken and worn out, the mind becomes the more sensitive of every little offence, and is disposed to magnify unintentional slights into real and designed insults. But this captious and irritable disposition, incident to this season of life, may be

much softened and subdued in a mind actuated by the principles of good manners, and improved by liberal accomplishments. But I must observe, that a certain gravity of deportment is extremely becoming in advanced years, when it preserves its proper bounds and does not degenerate into an acerbity of manners, and is what I very much approve. But as to *avarice*, it is inconceivable for what purpose that passion should find an admittance into an old man's breast. For, surely, nothing can be more irrational than to increase our provision for the road, the nearer we approach to our journey's end."—So wrote Cicero, and so writes every one imbued with either the spirit of religion or with a heart alive to the sympathies of nature.

The Septuagenarian now perhaps finds, that although he does not at all times possess the same zest for reading and study as when his senses were more active and his vision clearer; yet with sight less strong and with mental faculties unimpaired, he is enabled, and takes peculiar pleasure in reading and studying outward objects, and from things external, learns more vividly how to appreciate things not seen. For this end he walks abroad to gaze and ruminate upon the beauties of nature, and as he wanders ;

“ Exempt from public haunt

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running streams,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing,”

But as he may, like Cicero, turn from “ the pleasures

of a studious old age to those of *agriculture*," (though, as we think he may more easily, in these days, turn to those of *horticulture*) "as being perfectly consistent with every degree of advanced years, and as approaching the nearest of all others to those of the purely philosophical mind;" still we think that a Septuagenarian of taste and piety may, in our days, find more congenial pleasure in seeking out works of national art, and for ancient buildings connected with history or religion, that he may compare the manners, habits, and feelings of those more distant from him, with those more familiar and nearer to his home. Taking advantage of the warmth of summer and autumnal suns, he seeks for change of air, of scenery, and society, perchance in the company of one dear to him, by a short excursion to some other part of the kingdom, remote from that in which he resides. The mode of travelling, now rendered so easy and expeditious, occasions neither that fatigue nor lassitude which accompanied it in his earlier days, nor is it fraught with such expense. He may, therefore, venture upon a journey of some few hundred miles to visit places and scenes he has formerly seen, and of which he has either read or heard so much to interest him. Such a one then proceeds at once to the Scotch Metropolis, to "modern Athens," whence he makes some short excursions with the companion whom he has selected, either from congeniality of taste, or from ties of kindred, to cheer him and watch over him in his way.

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How does his heart expand, and his feelings kindle into warmth, when he beholds memorials of by-gone days, calling up reminiscences of historical reading and interest : the castle, the palace, the courts, the hospitals, the tolbooth, the old houses of the canon-gate, and the new mansions, and squares, with columns, statues, and other monuments which have their historical connexion with the battles and incidents, with the customs, manners, and bearing of the people from age to age,—thus exciting the liveliest emotions in those who have read the records of that interesting country. Nor less is his mind excited at the wonders of art and nature which captivate the eye from the height of the Carlton Hill, whether looking along the course of the Frith, or over the amphitheatre, composed of the old town, in conjunction with the new, of that singularly picturesque city. Onward he proceeds, and makes various and easy, as well as pleasant excursions. He finds the ancient churches and cathedrals, though many of them in ruins and decay, yet falling little short in respect of the beauty of architecture, of the best, though larger ones in England. They are, indeed, splendid monuments of art and of the devotion of those by whom they were erected ; but they have been suffered to fall into a state of dilapidation and ruin, chiefly from the hatred of the people, in the first instance, against the Roman Catholics, by whom they were built ; and next from their after-connexion with episcopacy, which still excites the animosity and rancour

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of Presbyterian hatred. Some exceptions there are to the general spoliation of these ancient structures, where, after much disfiguration, some few of them have been adapted to the public worship of the kirk ; such as the cathedral of Glasgow, the abbey churches of Kelso and Jedburgh, the cathedral of Dunkeld, and the abbey church of Dunfermline, and some others beyond the ready reach of our excursionist. But in most, if not in all these instances, the greatest ingenuity seems to have been exerted to graft on the original beauties of the fabric whatever was most incongruous and discordant. This is more particularly evident in one of the very beautiful, highly wrought Norman churches situated on one of the most magnificent sites in the kingdom,—the abbey church of Dunfermline,—overlooking the Firth of Forth, and commanding a fine view of Edinburgh, the castle and the Carlton hill, where, from the church tower, many striking objects may be seen in no less than fourteen adjacent counties. The nave is Anglo-Norman, with five massive pillars on each side, two of them zig-zagged and two spiral-ribbed, all of beautiful proportions ; but the windows, originally rich Norman, are most of them now half Gothicised, while the side walls, which are elaborately arched in the richest manner are broken, dilapidated, and disfigured. In proof of further mutilation we may mention, that at the entrance to what was formerly the choir, there are now placed, on each side of the doors, massive, ugly, red-bricked protuberances for furnaces to heat

the further extremities of the *auditory*, resembling the lime-burner's ovens in Staffordshire.

In all the modern Kirks which our excursionist saw and had previously seen in Scotland, whatever ecclesiastical character the external of them may bear, the interior seems, with the most studied intention, to have been designed to bring them to a near resemblance to our Courts of Justice, filled as they are with over-projecting galleries, and by placing the pulpit, if not before, yet as near to the eastern end as possible. This arrangement suits the mode of public worship of the country, which, though called simple, is unbecomingly meagre: "for the Scotch have," as we learn, "no altar, no liturgy, no organ, no instrumental music of any kind; no ceremonies of human invention to engage the senses or imagination: every part of their service seems to have been ordered as with a jealous anxiety to prevent the devotional feelings of the heart from being reached through any other medium than the understanding. But, alas, it too frequently stops at the understanding, and fails at reaching the heart altogether. Conceive of the dead—of our dearest and most beloved; that their remains are laid in the cold earth without a single voice of prayer or expressed hope of the resurrection. Conceive of the marriage—the holiest and most beautiful type of the Church—the very spouse of CHRIST, and so called by S. Paul—that it loses every symptom of its sacramental character, and becomes a mere civil contract. Conceive of the

two blessed Sacraments of our LORD, that they are performed as mere memorials or admissions into faith, without a font, or altar-table, or without any sort of service or ceremony to typify the truths which they teach, or the graces which they convey. We may, indeed, give up the glory of the *understanding* to the Presbyterians; but we may doubt concerning the teaching of the *heart*. Metaphysicians they may be; and full of intellect they are; but give us for the poor ones in CHRIST—the babes and the little ones—the glorious ardour of a devotional *heart*, and the warm-speaking voice of the Church of our forefathers in the faith.”<sup>1</sup>

What is called the new part of Dunfermline Church, that is, the choir,<sup>2</sup> was in 1818 made nearly square, by including the north and south transepts, with a low tower above, surmounted with a parapet, or a sort of battlement, on the running compartments of which, instead of being pierced in an open quatrefoil moulding, are introduced in large *Roman capitals* the words, “King Robert the Bruce,” with

<sup>1</sup> Bennet’s Church Porch, June 1, 1854.

<sup>2</sup> Of the search made at that time, under the authority of the Barons of Exchequer, for the body of King Robert, the Bruce, which Fordun, the oldest of Scotch-chronicle writers, had mentioned as buried *in medio chori*; Dr. Gregory (who was present at the exhumation, and afterwards at the re-interment,) says,—“The good Presbyterians of Dunfermline had forgotten what a *choir* was, and were digging over various other parts of the Church, and might as well have been digging in Westminster Abbey.”—*Chalmers’ History of Dunfermline*.

open letters, each so distinct, as to encircle the four sides. The angular pinnacles too are surmounted by royal crowns by way of finials, and all this in honourable designation of the burial place of that great patriot King whose remains lie interred below.

All this fully exhibits the indifference which the Kirk testifies, and its dislike to architectural propriety and taste, in thus disfiguring the ancient beautiful ecclesiastical edifices—a feeling greatly to be lamented! Still, their numerous and interesting Abbey Churches in ruin, present objects to the eye and heart pleasing, though most affecting; and we are so far reconciled to their dilapidated condition and appearance, as being preferable, even in that state, to their restoration, if similar instances of vitiated taste are to be perpetrated. However strongly and justly we may protest against the principles and teaching of the Church of Rome founded on their pretended traditions, it must be granted that those of former days were actuated by deep feelings of piety in rendering all they had and all they could procure to the service of God; and although we cannot adopt many points which they consider as essential to belief or practice, yet we cannot reject all others indiscriminately, in which there are some that we hold in common with them. All extremes are to be avoided; for over attention to externals is as censurable, as indifference or neglect of them,—“these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone.” Surely, scrupulous endeavours to

beautify the temples of God, are preferable to that vulgar familiarity, that low utilitarian spirit of withholding from them every ornament. God, in His mercy and benevolence, has covered the surface of nature with flowers of gay and vivid appearance, which, if they tend not to the direct service of man, evince the disposition to strew the path of his pilgrimage with what may captivate the eye and gladden the heart ;—with something, in short, beyond his mortal existence,—cheering him onward to a better country. The exuberant gorgeous splendour of the Romish Church, and the homeliness, not to say meanness, of the Kirk, are displeasing to the sight of the Anglo-Catholic who preserves in his public worship a dignified medium between both ; and this is, again, strongly exemplified in the difference between the superstitious administration of the Eucharist in the one, and the familiar household table-like conversation in the other. With what earnest piety, with what warmth of devotional feelings does the sincere Churchman approach the table of the LORD on every occasion that presents itself, that he may more closely hold a holy communion with, and become “a very member incorporate in the Mystical Body of his Blessed SAVIOUR,”—more especially as he of Threescore-years-and-ten may think, and may hope, and may pray, that the next time he partakes of this fruit of the Vine, may be elsewhere,—haply, that he may drink it new, with CHRIST in the Kingdom of His FATHER !

Our septuagenarian Excursionist now recrosses the Frith and bends his way to the romantic village of Hawthornden, that classic seat of the poet Drummond, once visited by the renowned Ben Jonson. Here is Rosslyn Chapel, that small, but perfect specimen of beautiful and elaborate architecture which has excited the admiration of all who visit it, but mostly those of pious contemplation who delight to witness such a proof of former devotion and love of God. Some few years since, when it was much dilapidated, it formed the first glorious spectacle of the first Diorama in our English Metropolis. Our septuagenarian had seen that exquisite picture and the ruin from which it was drawn, soon after the death of the late gallant Earl of Rosslyn, the friend of Wellington; on which occasion the hatchment and the banner of the deceased Lord were suspended from the beautiful "foliage-bound pillar" of the interior. There is a tradition that when any member of the family dies, the exterior is *miraculously* illuminated, and to this tradition allusion is made in the Lay of the last Minstrel:

" O'er Rosslyn all that dreary night  
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;  
'Twas broader than the watch-fire light,  
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

" Blazed battlement and pinnet high,  
Blazed ev'ry rose-carv'd buttress fair—  
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh  
The lordly line of high St. Clair !"

On this first visit of our Excursionist, the subdued pensive light of the interior harmonized with the decaying beauties of sculptured art in their combination with the heraldic emblazonment of the titles of the departed : while on the exterior of this gem of architecture the red watch-fire light was exchanged for the golden gleams of the mid-day sun. He had, now, the gratification of seeing this Chapel happily and judiciously restored, much to the honour of the taste and feelings of the present Earl, holding out a noble example to his countrymen to effect similar restorations ; and may that good and amiable Lord be enabled to carry out the wish he expressed to our Excursionist, of eventually providing for the ministration of public worship within it, at those seasons of the year when it invites the humble citizens of Edinburgh for change of scene and air, and innocent healthy exercise, to resort to it.—Hence, after a partial survey of other objects of interest in and around the City, he returns in a homeward direction, but is diverted from his course from a desire to review the ruins of Melrose Abbey, the remains of that highly appreciated ecclesiastical edifice, always calculated to raise in the mind of the spectator so much and such deep contemplation.

It is, indeed, beautiful in its decay, and exquisitely exciting in the mind of those conversant with Scottish history ; and, as to its outward and inward embellishment, its position, and associations, it is also most engaging, especially as all this is brought be-



fore his view by him who has enshrined it, in all the beauties of poetic composition.<sup>1</sup> Bent upon now seeing something connected with the retirement of country life, our Excursionist winds his way along the classic banks of the Yarrow, whose waters, beyond Selkirk, commence their course from "fair S. Mary's silver Lake," celebrated by poets and historians; but proceeding in the direction from Selkirk, he passes the elegant and hospitable mansion of Philipshaw of Murray celebrity, to the once royal castle of Newark, now only exhibiting a massive ruinous tower on the crest of a lofty, isolated hill, nearly encircled by the river, which, as it strikes upon his eye, recalls the supposed scene of the "Lay of the last Minstrel :"—

"He pass'd where Newark's stately tower  
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower :  
The Minstrel gaz'd with wishful eye—  
No humbler resting-place was nigh ;  
With hesitating step, at last,  
Th' embattled portal arch he pass'd,  
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar  
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,  
But never clos'd the iron door  
Against the desolate and poor."

Opposite to this ruin, in the valley beneath, is the farmstead of Foulshiels, the humble birth-place of Park, the enterprising African explorer, who was murdered on the banks of the Niger while successfully persevering in attaining the great object of his

<sup>1</sup> The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

ambition,—the ambition of genius and fortitude. Thence he approached the majestic woods of “Sweet Bowhill,” abounding in exquisite scenery, so pleasing to the eye amidst the rippling rush of waters continually and variously bursting on the ear from its rocky channel. On the opposite bank rests Hangingshaw, amidst whose splendid trees and drooping foliage on the height above, may a view be caught of that Villa in which hospitality abounds and social intercourse, the most interesting and intelligent, is to be found. Here, and in his rambles beyond S. Mary’s Lake, and on his return back, our Excursionist for some days passed much of them amidst the glorious works of nature lavishly bestowed by the bountiful hand of the CREATOR—lavishly bestowed, for how few were they who, comparatively speaking, could see them, and fewer still who could appreciate them, (save with such companions as he there found.) For it seemed to him, as he occasionally wandered through this scenery, alone, that it were expressly formed to calm the mind after the agitation of worldly pursuits; to allay the feelings of despondency, and to inspire a heartfelt consolation in those who impressed with the shortness of life and the vanity of its common pleasures, could, in lonely retirement, seek the congeniality of mental sentiment with the soothing and exquisite beauties that here surrounded him:—

“ When, musing on companions gone,  
We doubly feel ourselves alone,

Something, my friend, we yet may gain ;—  
 There is a pleasure in this pain ;  
 It soothes the love of lonely rest,  
 Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.  
 'Tis silent amid worldly toils,  
 And stifled soon by mental broils ;  
 But, in a bosom thus prepar'd,  
 Its still small voice is often heard,  
 Whispering a mingled sentiment,  
 'Twixt resignation and content.  
 Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,  
 By lone S. Mary's silent lake."<sup>1</sup>

Turning back a few miles from the road on the side of the Lake, he follows the outlet of it as the Yair breaks upon his view beneath the woods of Bowhill. Again he sallies out alone, and following the tortuous path beside the stream, renews his meditations amongst the rocks along which it winds its noisy course :

" Fair Yair,—which hills so closely bind,  
 Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,  
 Tho' much he fret, and chafe, and toil,  
 Till all his eddying currents boil."

And soon he falls in, and converses with those fishermen, who, at such seasons, retiring from the heat of towns, the studies of a college or the labour of professional duties, seek for relaxation and amusement under the tutorage of old Isaak Walton, in attempts to ensnare the peaceful occupants of the turf-coloured

<sup>1</sup> The whole description of the Lake and its situation are exquisitely painted by the poet, and will well repay the reader on turning to it.—Introduction to second Canto of Marmion.

waters of Scottish scenery. It is a contemplative amusement and brings to our thoughts the occupation of those simple and innocently-minded men whom our blessed LORD selected for His disciples, and who, when He called them to His ministry, left their nets, their boats,—their all,—to follow Him. Doubtless they were men of pure morals, and must have been impressed with a divine impulse, for it was the very brightness and majesty of the hidden Divinity, which shone through His human countenance which must have drawn them unto Himself, when they straightway, and without delay, followed *Him*, who promised to make them “fishers of men.”

This induces us to make a deviation from our subject, in order to reflect upon the character of those fishermen who thus became the chosen disciples of CHRIST, and who afterwards, under the influence of His Holy Spirit, became the great lights placed upon a hill to give the light of the Gospel, and to throw its radiance over the whole Christian world.

The trade in which they were engaged was of some little extent on the shores of what was called the “Sea of Galilee,” whose waters extended, according to Josephus, one hundred and forty furlongs in length, and forty in breadth. Their occupation was one of great simplicity, and the followers of it were (as in these days we find on our own sea shores) men of thought, perseverance, and general purity of manners, and who from the very nature of their constantly laborious employment, and living by their own

resources, are removed from the alluring evil examples of the world; while their minds are softened down by their exposure and liabilities to the dangers of the deep. It was this that made them sober-minded and of a teachable disposition, and therefore they were chosen as best fitted for the distinguished office of the ministry of one, who knew the purity of their character and the disposition of their hearts, and could endow them with all necessary qualifications for their sacred calling, by the influence of His own Spirit. "The science of the fishermen overcame the science of the philosophers. The weak overcame the strong; the unlearned taught the learned; the foolish convinced the wise; for in the *outward* form, it was the weakness of God, and the foolishness of God; but *within*, were the might of faith, and the attractions of divine love, and the Almightiness of divine grace."—How frequently did our LORD allude to their former occupation in His parables, His miracles, and in His teaching; and how exceedingly apposite and touching were such allusions. The net cast into the sea, with reference to the day of judgment,—the miraculous draught of fishes, when thrown in by His direction, although two of them had toiled all night and caught nothing; showing that all labour is useless where the blessing of God is not with it; and truly is it the more so in the ministry of the Church. Again, in the thousands fed in the wilderness by the marvellous increase of bread and fishes, in allusion to the spiritual nutriment of the world at

large dispensed in the "Word of God." And again, more signally, when after His resurrection, He found that His disciples had returned to their former manner of life, He made Himself known to their astonished senses, first, by another miraculous draught of fishes, typical of the immense number of souls, which should be converted to God by their mission, as fishers of men; and next, at CHRIST's invitation to partake of the bread and fish that He had previously provided, when they saw *Him eat* who had been dead and buried, and was now risen again amongst them. And wonderful is the reflection, that at the Creation, God was pleased to make a merciful and inexhaustible provision for the necessities of man, not only in what the earth in all its fruitfulness might yield, but that the water under the earth might be no less productive. His memorable words were,—*"Let the waters bring forth abundantly!"*—and abundantly, we know, they do produce: for, hundreds of thousands inhabitants of the earth live, for the greater period of their lives, on fish. And we know that fish generally come in vast quantities to our own shores when they are in the greatest and highest perfection. Pilchards have come in shoals, sometimes of two hundred fathoms in length, and eighteen fathoms in depth, and so with six or seven other species; and when it is considered that no creatures are so prolific as these, and that an individual amongst them is said to lay more than nine millions of eggs or spawn,—and further

than all this,—when we add, that a single drop of water contains thirty thousand animalculæ, perfectly formed, with bones, muscles, nerves, heart, arteries, veins, lungs, and animal spirits. Well may we exclaim, “Oh God! wonderful art Thou in Thy operations!” for indeed the providence of God’s creating hand, keeping pace with His creative energy, proclaims power and wisdom surpassing all the faculties of man to conceive.

Such were the reflections that arose in the mind of our Excursionist rambling along the banks of the streams, as he had formerly done amongst the hills and burns of Highland scenery. In these more romantic lowland scenes he occasionally met the lonely fisherman seeking contemplative amusement with the rod and fly, and stopped awhile to watch his success, or to interchange a few remarks; thence going onward in his walk, he gazes on the enormous stones which hem in the fretful, noisy current coming down from precipices and springs above; while the dashing and boiling waterfall rushes rapidly along, glittering here and there with sunshine, now occasionally reflecting its dazzling rays, now concealed under the dark shade of branching trees, and now lost in some sudden turn of the channel whose ripple shows and guides him further in his walk.

After awhile he is arrested by the baying of a watch-dog, and the appearance of a small turf-covered dwelling, and turns aside to hold converse

with a matron who, at one and the same time, chides her trusty guardian and encourages her children's confidence ; while in all meekness and simplicity she tells of the absence of her husband in the distant glen, and how he labours abroad, and she works at home, in support of their sequestered life : narrating, too, how, leaving her cottage on the sabbath morn to the same trusty sentinel, she trudges with her partner and the children, perchance attended by a pony and a boy, to some distant Kirk, where tarrying through the day, she gathers much to soothe her mind and cheer her heart from the ministration of her Pastor, whose teaching in accordance with the Bible that each one can read, and the hymn of human composition which each one and all delight to sing, despite of unison and melody, rivets their attention until the close of the service ; when she opens her stores and provender, and holds social converse with others of the rural clan. She gathers also something of the world without, from neighbourly conversation of interest and utility ; and thus exhibits the manner and way in which these humble and sequestered families keep up connexion with each other ; and how their different modes of life are not without pleasure, although it be such pleasure as they in the busy toils of the world are unable to appreciate : and this is common, as well in districts of open, wide-spreading wastes, as in the woodlands, from which the Kirk or village are remote.

The rural minister himself who lives in those wilds,



he too, if he be able, perpetually wanders amongst his scattered flock, with each separate family of whom he is ever a welcome guest ;—he too, when he has partaken of the simple refreshment offered to him, opens upon his work. He inquires into their condition ; what they have done ; what they want ; what they have learnt ; and what advice they need. He then prays with them and reads with them ; gives little tracts to the children ; hears them repeat hymns ; enjoins love and affection to each ; the wife to make her home comfortable for her husband's return from work ; the husband to concert with the wife the best means of adapting their slender means to their moderate necessities ; the sons to aid the labours of their father ; the daughters to follow up the industry of their mothers ; and all, at the same time, to consider what is best to be done for the general good, and to set about the best means of accomplishing it. But in all districts, if the minister be enfeebled by age or other impediment to undertake such pastoral visitations, or even when he is able, he generally contrives at a certain hour in an appointed day of the week, to open a meeting to which all may come that can, to the " Hall " of his Manse, where he gives a lecture and engages them in serious converse. And it seems that the Presbytery, whose members wisely build and maintain these manses, contrive to enlarge this place of entrance the better to adapt it to this goodly purpose. And this is the more necessary, as the people having

no Common Prayer Book, nor liturgy, as a companion to their Bibles, depend chiefly upon the extemporaneous prayers of their ministers, having no other aid or guide than such as their hymn-books may supply. As they do not read the Psalms alternately with their minister, nor openly declare their faith by the recital of any Creed, they require instruction in their religious duties, by private modes of teaching ; and thus in each parish or district, the people are divided into classes, and each class is taught, at prescribed intervals, in this manner, such knowledge of religion as each may require.

It is, indeed, delightful to see and to study the life and manners of the lowest classes of society who are destined to reside "far from the busy hum of men," and to learn, that although cut off in appearance from all the general resources of pleasure, how much happiness, contented and unaspiring minds derive from sources, unknown and unappreciable by others who dwell amidst the noise and continual ferment of ordinary worldly cares and occupations.

This satisfaction the man of threescore-years-and-ten may easily obtain while in health, and in possession of very moderate means, by some such excursion as that which we have depicted, and which may thus be made subservient to the great object he has in view, of beholding the beauties of nature in conjunction with the works of man, and drawing such deductions from both, as may best contribute to exercise and exalt his own mind, and enable him by

word and example to benefit others ; and that while rejoicing in all that may here be seen to his own pleasure and his own soul's health, he may make it subservient to his hope of attaining, through the mediation of his Redeemer, to greater joys hereafter.

Cicero, in his treatise on "Old Age," in his enumerations of what may strictly be termed, rational amusements, dwells much upon the enjoyment of conversation, as a pleasure superior to others of social and friendly intercourse ; and, indeed, it is one of the highest worth as that which is generally within our reach, whether at home or abroad, and at all times or seasons. "I acknowledge my obligations to old age," he says, "for having increased my desire for the pleasures of conversation, at the same time that it has abated it for those which depend upon the palate. I would not, however, be thought so professed an enemy to the latter, as to deny that, within certain limits, they may very reasonably, perhaps, be indulged : and I declare for the satisfaction of those who are unwilling to part with any gratification of this kind, that I do not find old age to be a disqualification for the enjoyment of them. On the contrary, I take delight in joining those social parties where, agreeable to good old custom, instituted by our ancestors, a president is appointed ; and I am much diverted to hear him deliver out his important edicts. I rejoice, too, in those moderate and such refreshing cups which Socrates recommends in Xenophon's banquet, as the different seasons of the

year may invite. Even when I am in the country among my Sabine neighbours, I allow myself the same kind of indulgence, as I every day add one to the number of their evening societies, which we prolong by every variety of pleasing conversation."

There are many other sources open to a mind alive to the outward, as well as inward motives of religion, from which all, of any age or station, may derive instruction combined with amusement; and amongst these is one peculiarly adapted to the contemplative mind impressed with the taste for the beauties of ecclesiastical architecture united with an ardent sense and feeling for devotional public worship—love for the habitation of God's House, and the desire of constantly visiting it, not only in the time of usual service, but at other times to have the privilege of enjoying solitary meditation within it:—This is a pleasure peculiarly adapted to the aged, for there they may ponder upon their own lowliness, and the honour and praise of the Almighty amidst the memorials of those gone before them; and with associations in strict unison with the spirit of devotion they inspire.

Some there are, perhaps, who have not passed more than a few days in any place without paying a visit to its parish church—have scanned its style of architecture, lamented barbarous repairs, or approved of others if, haply, made in good keeping with the building, and in a spirit expressive of the intention of upholding it in a manner worthy of its sacred purpose. Glancing upon the memorials of the dead

externally, and on those more studied and embellished within, they may remark how those long-departed would have been unknown and forgotten had not such records of their existence been preserved, of the place in which they dwelt, and where they worshipped, and where their remains were deposited. These considerations alone, are sufficient to cause the reflective mind to lament that, generally speaking, these sacred Temples have not been, nor are they now, upheld in the manner, in the style, and in the mere decency, which a religious people should feel, and assuredly should know, that it is their duty,—the duty they owe to God, to their families, and to their fellow-creatures, to sustain;—yes, to sustain them in a way to manifest their love for “the place where God’s honour dwelleth,” by a proper adaptation of it to the purpose for which it was specially erected and consecrated, and from which the first supplication within it was,—that the eyes of God might be opened upon it day and night, as the place where His Name was put to hearken unto the people,—to hear, and to forgive! A place too, in which where two or three are gathered together in the name of CHRIST, He is there present. Let us ask,—Should such a sacred place not testify and manifest a reverence and respect, at least equal, if not greater than such as designate the residence of those who expend so much care and wealth upon their own habitations?

But it is in visiting from time to time our noble

Cathedrals that the piously reflective mind never fails to derive profit by turning it back to the ages that have passed from their first, or their renewed erection, on the monarchs that have swayed their terms of sovereignty, on their superstitions, their tempers and habits, manners and customs. Some of these particulars may be gathered from their tombs, and monuments, and tablets, and even from the effigies of men of renown who are not unfrequently found there, represented as when living.

It is evident that these splendid structures, although applied to all the purposes of the worship of our Church, were well adapted to the unreformed ritual, as there was formerly more than one altar for separate services simultaneously proceeding. For in the cathedrals of the Romish Church the worshippers do not, as in ours, form *one* congregation, but many, and their different services are continuously succeeding each other, as the different groups pass in and out at their leisure. While we, in accordance with the practice of the Jewish, and with that of the primitive Church, and in accordance with Apostolic usage, gather together the assembly in the House of God at a fixed hour, and make our common prayer to the ALMIGHTY, through the mediation of His Blessed SON, sending forth our invocations with one voice, to rise as incense before the Throne of the Most High.

It is generally admitted that these noble Temples, which impress awe and sublimity on the mind, have

a wonderful effect in promoting devotional feelings ; for as we pace the several aisles, we walk over, or pass by the memorials of persons once eminent for their piety, their learning, their love of their Country, of their families and friends, and of the great God, to Whom all services are due, all thanks, praise, and glory !

“ Now all is hushed and still as death !—’tis dreadful !  
How reverend is the face of this tall pile ;  
Where ancient pillars rear their marble heads  
To bear aloft its arched and pond’rous roof,  
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,  
Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe  
And terror on my aching sight :—the tombs  
And monumental caves of death look cold  
And shoot a chillness to my troubled heart.”

Knowing these memorials to record the virtues of the illustrious dead for our example, and that their last remains were deposited in and around the sacred edifice dwindled or dwindling into dust ; they continue to recal their history and the good deeds which, by the grace of God, they have been enabled to perform for our imitation ; and we take comfort from the hope that we may be permitted to do the same ; and become partakers with them of God’s Heavenly Kingdom. At the same time we must guard ourselves against the supposition that although the defunct body was, while living, “the Temple of the HOLY GHOST,” and therefore entitled to all possible decency and respect when consigned to

the grave; that, afterward, it was endued with any virtue whatever applicable to any human purpose. No;—these remains of the body are of the earth, earthy,—they formed “the vile body which God will change, that it *may* be like unto His glorious Body, whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.”

There is no charm in human dust and ashes to allay pain, to avert evil, to secure good, or to effect any such purpose as the vulgar fancy; and as to those relics of saints or eminent persons, whether the bones, the hair, the garments, or other materials that might have been worn or used by them when living, and to which Roman superstition attaches such an odour of sanctity as may work miracles;—this all is a delusion, the mere dream of the imagination.

To suppose that any of these can work in a manner to produce the same virtues, qualities, abilities, and powers as distinguished the original possessors of them, would lead to as fair and equal a supposition that the chair in which Johnson compiled his dictionary would confer lexicographical powers to one who should occupy it; or the power and force of primitive preaching to a man who would place himself in Wickliffe’s pulpit at Lutterworth; or the ability to write history to him who might sit at the table at Plumstead on which Gibbon wrote his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;” or that using the instruments of Newton or sitting in his college rooms would enable a man to calculate



eclipses, or to descry from his telescope yet undiscovered planets in the blue ether above him.

Whatever may be our Creed, it is almost impossible not to have a feeling of reverence for the venerable "House of Prayer" on our approach to it, and as we enter the nave or aisles of our Cathedrals we are sensible, if we do not express it, how well the beauty of architectural symmetry in the vaulted roofs, the stately transepts, the clerestories and triforiums, the varied capitals of numberless pillars, the storied windows, the rich arcades, all combine with the disposition of the mind to yield to the holy influences they inspire; and should the voices of the choir in full unison with the organ break upon the ear, we may be tempted to exclaim and feel with the Poet:

" And ah ! what art can teach—  
What human voice can reach  
The sacred organ's praise ?  
Notes inspiring holy love—  
Notes that wing their heav'nly ways  
To join the choirs above."

Happily, in these our days, these structures are now more generally thrown open to an unrestricted entrance of all who desire to flow into them; for the vulgar mind, formerly so prompt to injure what was so generally admired, gave way to a vile and mischievous propensity to mark and scratch upon the inner walls,—desecrations now, fortunately, more generally discontinued. The age, in this respect, is much improved; and the mind, better educated, per-

ceives that all honour is due to the sacred house into which all are now freely admitted, and with respect to its services, all are cordially invited.

And here it may be observed, that as in some of these Cathedrals, not only is entrance to them freely opened at stated times of the day, but there are to be seen printed instructions placed in several conspicuous places directing the visitor's attention to the chiefest beauties, and to the best positions for seeing them. In others, there are short printed accounts of the founders, with directions as to the monuments of the greatest interest, so as to afford a sufficient guide to the stranger; at the same time leaving him at liberty to suit his own time and convenience for making his observations.<sup>1</sup> Surely to these advantages another and a much better might be afforded, by placing down the side aisles, or in other more retired situations, Lecterns upon which a Bible and Prayer Book might be left, so that at any time, any one might thither resort to offer a silent supplication to Heaven, or to meditate, unmolested, upon a portion of Scripture, to his soul's health and comfort, within the holy edifice.

But proceeding towards the chancel for the purpose of attending the public service, we may frame our thoughts, from a glance at the monuments and objects around, to a suitable temper and disposition for the exercise of devotion; and, to such minds as are susceptible of the feelings which grave, deep, and

<sup>1</sup> Particularly at Norwich, Peterborough, and Ely.

solemn music inspires, and whose taste accords with the majesty of the ancient solemn chants and music above the scientific light and operatic compositions of modern times, the earnestness of their devotion will be heightened and assisted by strains appealing to their sensibilities, attuning their hearts and raising their souls to heavenly contemplations.

“Then let the pealing organ blow,  
In the full-voic'd choir below;  
In service high and anthem clear,  
As may with sweetness thro' mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all heaven before mine eyes!”

The service ended, and the edifice still open, the worshipper, if in a meditative mood, is left at leisure to traverse the several aisles, the oratories, or side chapels, and other parts, alone; and if, following the suggestion of the pious and poetic author of “The Cathedral,” he has the desire to attach sacred associations to each of these, where George Herbert’s “Parson” says, “he could attach moral and sacred lessons to the windows and to the floor;” such meditative indulgences may be fostered to advantage by this adaptation of moral and religious instruction to these visible objects; and the reflective one in imagination may say:—

“Lend me thy hand, celestial visitant,  
Into the inner chambers where Thou sittest  
Unfolding lessons of diviner love!  
Touch'd by th' unearthly wand, ethereal doors

Fly open, answering to the wondrous key,  
I seem behind this shifting scene of things  
Admitted, heav'n's high counsels to behold,  
I seem to wander through mysterious ways,—  
Shadows of other days, and other lights  
Around me,—such is Thy unfathom'd word ;  
And oft at every turn myself decry.  
Patriarchs, and kings, and prophets, great and good,  
Are hurrying all before us to the tomb,  
And cry aloud,—‘ We seek another home ! ’ ”

It is much to be lamented that our cathedrals, and some of our large churches, contain monuments and tombs and tablets bearing inscriptions of consummate vanity and worldliness, instead of simply designating the name, age, and time of departure of the dead ; and in some cases, with only such few and sober words as may impress the reader with a moral or religious reflection. In some few instances, also, it is not without interest that we see one pre-eminent for virtue or learning represented by a recumbent figure in the attitude of prayer ; and others whose acknowledged piety, wisdom, or conduct, are expressed in language simple and elegant. Such characters as these deserve remembrance, and may thus be recorded with the hope of holding out their examples for imitation. But profuse and extravagant praise too often lavished where little or no merit has been due, and which often tell what the individual should have been, rather than what he really was, encourage vanity and deceit, and fall under the category of the French proverb,—“ He speaks as

falsely as an epitaph.”<sup>1</sup> And those enormous monuments with figures erect, recumbent, and outstretched, as large as life, (excepting such, perhaps, as cover the graves of sovereigns, or those of some knights of fame, and prelates, in the fourteenth century,) disfigured by monstrous costume ;—these and others with medallions hung upon a huge superstructure of incongruous Roman architecture, accompanied with urns and Pagan burnings, occupying large surfaces of, not unfrequently, very beautiful gothic tracery ;—these are not only sad specimens of vitiated taste, but of bad and perverted feeling, such as are unworthy of being placed within a Christian Church. There is, however, no general rule without an exception, and where the inscription is faithful, well expressed, and intelligible to every reader, and not too long, it may become a pleasing and useful memorial that will be appreciated by posterity.

Addison has passed a severe but just censure upon this point. Speaking of the inscriptions in Westminster Abbey, “There are some,” he says, “covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that if it were possible for the dead persons to be acquainted

<sup>1</sup> “ Il mentoit comme une Epitaphe.”

“ It was customary at the funerals of illustrious persons, for the nearest relative to speak an oration in honour of the deceased. This practice, as several Roman authors complain, tended very much to corrupt the truth of history ; as these panegyrics, which frequently imputed virtues and actions to the object of them which never existed, were too often resorted to by historians as faithful documents and memoirs.”—*Cicero in Brut. Liv. viii. 40.*

with them, they would blush at the praises which their friends have bestowed upon them. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the departed in *Greek* or *Hebrew*, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month.”<sup>1</sup>

Having thus alluded to Addison and Westminster Abbey, it would be fastidious here to forego the pleasure of recalling his concluding observation:—  
 “When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies within me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tomb-stone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I

<sup>1</sup> It was thought that Addison in recommending the following short epigrammatic Epitaph meant it for himself:—

“Hic jacet R. C.

In expectatione diei supremi.

Qualis erat, iste dies indicabit.”

Here lies R. C., in expectation of the last day.

What sort of man he was, that day will discover.

As an example of force and brevity in an epitaph, what can exceed that celebrated eulogy, mentioned by Cicero, inscribed on the monument of Attilius Catalinus, and in which it is hardly in the power of language to convey, in words so few and simple, a stronger idea of his virtues?—

“Uno . ore . plurimæ . consentiunt .

gentes . primarium . populi .

fuisse . virum .—”

All nations agree in esteeming  
 him as the first of Romans.

consider the vanity of grieving for those who must quickly follow ; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them,—when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with contests and disputes ;—I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together !”

Here it may not be uninteresting to remark, that the Septuagenarian Excursionist, to whom allusion has already been made, was recently permitted to range through this Abbey Church unattended and alone. As he was silently meditating upon such things as Addison here has so beautifully described, he suddenly heard the voices, and saw at a little distance the persons of two strangers, apparently Americans, earnestly inquiring to be directed to the burial places of Pitt and Fox. The verger, or his representative, informed them that he knew not the places of their interment. As they seemed greatly disappointed, our Excursionist approached them and offered his assistance towards affording them the gratification they desired. Leading them, therefore, to the north transept, and pointing to the noble statue of the great Lord Chatham, “with flowing robe and outstretched hand in attitude to speak,” he directed them to look on the pavement beneath

for the letters W. P., which with no difficulty they found; he next directed them to step across to the distance of six or seven paces, where they found the letters C. J. F., also on the pavement; but in both cases the initials, though not obliterated, were not very discernible. Our Excursionist was gratified, the guide surprised, and the strangers pleased; when they asked, how he, apparently a stranger also, could have given them such particulars? he replied, from calling to memory the few first lines of an elegy with which he, from peculiar circumstances, was well acquainted. The lines in question, which are not foreign to our present purpose, are as follow:—

“ What ! only eighteen feet asunder !  
Statesmen who kept the world in wonder,  
And gave each other sturdy knocks,  
Whilst living Pitt, and living Fox !  
Now tranquil neighbours here ye rest,  
Each in his own contracted chest.  
Ye’ve had your day, ye’ve run your race,  
And there’s no struggle now for place.  
A solemn lesson to the mind  
Of jarring rivals left behind,  
But Death your dust alone controls,  
Your fame’s immortal as your souls.  
When shall again the senate hear  
Such eloquence to charm the ear,  
With such persuasive force as hung  
In diff’rent modes on either tongue ?  
Thine, Pitt, majestically rolled,  
Like Arno, smooth o’er sands of gold !  
And Fox, impetuous patriot, thine  
Burst like the torrent of the Rhine !



But talents, be they e'er so great,  
In vain withstand the will of fate.  
He, who so ably held the helm,  
Whose energy had saved the realm  
From danger of surrounding woes,  
From civil feud and savage foes,  
Fell a true martyr to regret,  
To see his glorious plan o'erset,  
The other toiled ne'er half an age,  
Like squirrel in a rolling cage,  
To satisfy ambition's aim,  
And just as he attain'd the same,  
And scarce had mounted to the station,  
When Death enforc'd his resignation !  
The death-beds of these famous two  
Present an awful scene to view.  
That hour equality which brings  
To state of peasants and of kings.  
Vain mortals !—what availeth then  
The pomp of power, the praise of men ?  
No longer, then, the heart beguile,  
The people's shout, the monarch's smile :  
Nought, then, can cheer the anxious soul,  
And human fears and pangs control,  
But conscience pure, and heart that's clear,  
Immortal hope, and faith sincere.—  
Fox, if he be not much belied,  
Died as some Pagan sages died,  
Disdaining by religion's light,  
To aid philosophy's dim sight ;  
Like that droll sophist, who they say,  
Walk'd with a lanthorn at noon-day.—  
Pitt, with true Christian faith inspir'd,  
Invok'd his SAVIOUR, and expired !—  
Fox, fraught with ev'ry power to please,  
Lov'd social mirth, convivial ease :  
His rival, bright to public view,  
Reserved his private smiles for few.

Some, charmed, would *live* with Fox and wit,  
But grant me, Heav'n, to *die* like Pitt !''

The cathedrals of our country are, most of them very fine, and in which the daily services, with slight exceptions, are done with great care and devout feeling, though still open to some comment and improvement. The larger of them were endowed with the addition of schools and almshouses, together with an establishment of Deans, Canons, Minor Canons, and all other offices suited, efficiently, to uphold the due and full performance of divine worship, as well as to diffuse hospitality and charity, for all which purposes the founders and benefactors specially and exclusively bequeathed their property. These establishments were also intended to be upheld as exemplars of the office and duty which were, though in a lower degree, to be observed and followed in all the churches of the kingdom at large.

These several objects are preserved in a considerable degree, and to the extent of the means now existing. The structures themselves engross a very large proportion of their revenues to sustain them against the mouldering effects of atmosphere and time; and when it is considered how many of them were built in distant centuries, and that the materials of which they are composed, from the wasting action of climate and the vicissitudes of the seasons, are continually and rapidly decaying, it is not surprising that so vast a sum for annual reparation is required as to sink deeply into the pecuniary resources of the

corporate body, in addition to the heavy expenditure in support of their choirs, and other interminable requirements. The legislature has of late interposed to curtail, what are now deemed, unnecessary offices and ministers, until there is left barely enough to provide for the continuance of such as the founders, benefactors, and others, gave their wealth and property to maintain. These eminent persons had, also, another great object in view. They endowed places and offices expressly for scholars and others who, unfitted or unconnected with the cares and concerns of professional and secular employments, were designed to devote their time and talent to works of literature. It was for such learned men that provision was made, not only to uphold and protect the pure doctrines and principles of the Christian religion, but who should, by their application and talents, advance general literature, the sciences, the education and manners of the people ; that men, free from the shackles of the world, and independent of ordinary pursuits and occupations, might be sufficiently and amply supported and rewarded for their time, their labour, and ingenuity. Cut off or abridge these incentives and supports by taking away or diminishing the means, and not only are these establishments deprived of that which the original founders and donors designed for them, but the Church is impoverished and weakened by such spoliation ; and men of low and ordinary talents and of un-refined taste and manners are substituted for those of higher

order and fitness; while religion and the work of propagating religious truth critically examined and set forth in all purity and correctness, is left to the teaching of half-educated persons as a means of mere subsistence. Talent, energy, genius, and success, are most commonly found among those to whom the greatest rewards are open, while that which is indiscriminately within the reach of all, and which, therefore, requires no stimulus, and calls forth no intellectual energy, but is common, indifferent, and dull, has the tendency to damp all desire, all aspiration after excellence, and to sink the study of sound theology, and with it, that practical science of sound philosophy founded upon them, below their proper standard.

Our Church is capable of doing great and good things, if her energies were called into vigorous action. We stand much in need of orators, great writers, and great interpreters of Scripture, all of which might be forthcoming were an earnest and honest application of such means as are still within our reach duly employed. There is sufficient talent and sufficient zeal in the members of our Church were they called forth and invited by proper selection and encouragement; but, so long as we, unfortunately, see men chosen rather as politicians than as scholars and theologians,—more from considerations of party, than from ability and merit,—that nepotism operates to the prejudice of talent, and that those of mediocre ability are preferred to places and honours

in the Church, which might be filled with others of indisputable genius and energy ; we must not be surprised that our system is languishing while Rome is swelling on all sides with an increasing surge ; nor, that we should have the incubus of not less than thirty-five sects, arrogant, ignorant, and intolerant, besides millions in a state of such indifference as amounts to Atheism, pressing against us. Who then is sufficient for these things ?

We have the assurance that he to whom ten or five talents are committed to his charge and are used by him with industry and fidelity, shall have a proportionate reward, whilst he, to whom only one is given, and that one neglected, will inevitably be punished. The parable illustrating this doctrine is, indeed, applicable to those of every class and condition of life, but it is particularly so, to the clergy, as it appears to have been delivered with a special reference to the Apostles, and through them, to the ministers of CHRIST'S Church, enabling them, as it seems, to pass judgment upon their own previous career. By it we learn, that some are naturally gifted with first-rate ability, or high situation by birth, or some other source of original distinction ; to another is given a vigorous mediocrity of ability or condition ; to another, still inferior condition and ability. This is clearly the common course of nature, and therefore, is not to be blamed. But it is in the *use* that makes the distinction. If any, but more especially those of the ministry, shall be able

to look back upon their career with the evidence that they have not suffered their talent to be "buried in a napkin," they may be, comparatively at least, satisfied; and if they persevere under the grace of God truly maintaining this evidence of their utility, they may look forward to the promised recompense. High ability, of course, is liable to high demands. The natural energy of S. Peter and the natural eloquence of S. Paul laid on them a heavier task than on the other great missionaries; and perhaps, it may not be too much to say, that we may almost perceive in the language of both, a *security* arising from the *recollection* that they had not buried their talent in a napkin. Of the other Apostles, excepting S. John, we know little; they were evidently persons of mediocrity of intellect, yet they, too, did not neglect the use of the talent committed to their charge.

After all these reflections and incidents upon the world and the things of the world, they of the three-score-years-and-ten now fearfully approach the consideration of the most momentous subject that can possibly engage the mind of man;—the final judgment, and the final separation "between the sheep and the goats!"

The subject is one of constant exhortation from the pulpit, and properly so; for, however the hearers may generally conceive it to be thoroughly known and understood by them from its frequent repetition, yet, so long as they commonly act as though it were forgotten, or at such a distance as ceases to alarm,

and do not bring it home to their feelings as well as to their senses; the subject, though inexpressibly solemn, must be made to act with all the force of earnest and judicious remonstrance upon their minds as to produce such conduct through life as may make them "wise unto salvation." But though it be necessary to draw the unstable mind of man to the contemplation of this subject by frequent allusion to it, it would be well to consider whether the constant repetition of its terrors may not produce apathy from too great a familiarity with it, or despondency from its absorbing interest.

That awful scene is represented in strong and appalling colours by the Evangelist. It is represented in language sublime and terrific. It cannot be read by the sensitive mind but with thrillings of alarm, approaching almost to despair. Indeed, some very learned and impressive preachers, possessing great power of eloquence, and consequently of making the deepest impression on the senses of their hearers, have depicted this scene in such broad, deep, and gloomy colouring that, in some instances, persons have with difficulty retained their places in the congregation, suffering the most painful emotions. This extreme should be avoided upon all general occasions and in all but extraordinary cases, for it must be acknowledged that the picture is too often drawn in colours black and dark without the admission of that light amidst the shade with which the judicious divine would treat the subject.

The justice of God when CHRIST sits in judgment must be awful in the extreme, but it must, also, be borne in mind, that this justice will be tempered with mercy : to what extent that mercy will operate, none can know, but all may hope for it who have endeavoured, by the grace of God, to do His will and have manifested their faith and love in Him. Here, we are all in a state of probation, preparatory to the final trial ; there we cannot but have the fullest assurance that the evidence to be adduced against the sinner—and all are sinners—before that tribunal can neither be gainsaid nor resisted ; and, that such evidence will clearly prove before the assembled universe, that we have, one and all, grievously and continuously transgressed, by thought, word, and deed, from our birth until now, against the Divine Majesty of that God who called us into existence that we might walk in His ways and live. We were created free agents, with the knowledge of good and evil, and with the assurance that we possess the power, by prayer and supplication, offered through the mediation of One mighty to save, to pass our probation though in fear and trembling, yet with the confirmed hope of future acceptance ; but we have rebelled against the laws of God, broken His commandments, done despite to His grace, and thus rendered ourselves altogether, the very best of us,—“unprofitable servants.” Man, it is true, has been constituted from the fall of Adam, infirm and weak, naturally corrupt and grievously prone to wickedness ; still he is



a free agent and accountable for his actions ; for with all his corruption and proneness to evil, he has access to the Spirit of grace ever ready to answer his invocation of it ; but, he will not invoke it, or if he does, he will not strictly obey its influence, nor act otherwise than in some measure to neglect or quench it. He gives way to another spirit which is ever at enmity with it,—he follows the things of this world regardless of that which is to come, and with a perfect consciousness, which of the two he ought to prefer, he pertinaciously adheres to the temporary allurements of the present moment, rather than look for the permanent joys of the future. It is true that no mortal is sinless,—for “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, one and all, with the bias of their common nature, have sinned and done amiss.

Look at Moses, who for betraying an impatience bordering upon doubt, was denied entrance into the promised land ! Look at Aaron, who relapsed into sin by yielding to the idolatry of the Israelites ! Look at the Kings of Israel and Judah, especially those who had been the most highly favoured, but who by disobedience came either to a sudden or an unhappy end ! Look, more especially at David, the man after God’s heart, who after the commission of the greatest sins, evinced a repentance unfeignedly deep and sincere, but who never, in his after life, experienced anything but the most bitter, unmitigated sorrow and remorse ! And with regard to those

who appeared after the birth of our SAVIOUR, with the exception of what we know of John the Baptist, Peter, the most eminent of Saints, fell from his allegiance to his divine LORD, and all his fellow disciples forsook that Master in the hour of need and fled from Him.—These all exhibited, in a greater or less degree, the feebleness and corruption of their nature when unsupported by the special influence of the HOLY SPIRIT. What, then, is the condition of all others who since that time have toiled through their earthly pilgrimage? Is there any one of them who has not to answer before the awful tribunal of CHRIST's judgment for sins committed in the body, and to be closely questioned upon every particular of their lives, however secret? And when we read that "for every idle word (spoken with an evil intent) that man shall speak, he shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," we may, even distantly, conceive what will be the thorough sifting of our thoughts and actions, and with what searching scrutiny will the evidence of our conviction be adduced from the moment of our conscious recollection of it ourselves to the close of it;—then how great the shame, how enormous the ingratitude, how black and indelible the sin;—oh! how intensely must all this be felt when exposed before the assembled angels of Heaven, and how deep, how bitter, how overwhelming the remorse that will follow!<sup>1</sup> The bare

<sup>1</sup> How often have we in the hours of sleep, seen images of the departed, whether friends or others, and beheld scenes, and joined

conception of this, and of more than this, all, all inexplicable, is sufficient to bewilder our senses and render us miserable. This is, indeed, awfully terrific, and we may in times of meditation and despondency almost give ourselves up for lost, when we consider that thus it will be, for the Word is gone forth, and none can change it. Here, indeed, is ground for fear bordering upon despair, for,—all having sinned, all must appear in judgment!

But God be thanked! we have, if we will only go unto Him in faith and love, One mighty to save,—One “who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them”—we, in our SAVIOUR have this peculiar and inestimable blessing, for it was not so in the times of old. Noah, indeed, is called a “preacher of righteousness,” because before the general deluge he had incessantly inveighed against the sins of the people. He practically enforced the danger they incurred of inevitable destruction if they did not amend, by preparing, during sixty years, the ark by which he and his family alone, of all

in conversation with those in very early life, of which all remembrance had entirely passed away, until thus revived,—revived in a dream,—of things totally obliterated and forgotten, and of which nothing, when awake, could have been recalled, as being past all recollection. This with some has been experienced in a manner so distinct, and so powerful, as to have excited the certainty that every word uttered, and every action done, in all and in every period of existence will, with undeniable consciousness, be stated, recalled, and vividly produced to the self-conviction of the sinner.

human beings on the earth, would escape the coming wrath of God. But they would neither hear nor see, and he could not save.

And here it may be inquired, that as it is said ;—that before CHRIST “ shall be gathered *all nations* ;” will those of the antediluvian ages as well as all of the Gentile world, be also summoned to that great Assize ; because the people of the old world have been signally punished, and their name and place washed out by the waters of the great deluge ? Our reply to this is best made by turning to the authority of S. Paul, who solemnly declares that *all*, “ *all* must then appear,—that *every one* may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” And hence he draws the conclusion that all, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, are to stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST. Now it was only the people of one age, who were in existence at the time of the flood, and were so punished in this world for their iniquity by that dire calamity ; but it is expressly recorded that those in the previous ages (including 1600 years) were so deeply stained with such complicated wickedness, “ that every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually ;” such, that it repented the LORD that He had made man, and it grieved Him at His heart ; they, therefore, must be taken as included amongst the summoned. And here, as bearing directly on this point, we may consider that difficult and obscure

passage of S. Peter,<sup>1</sup> where he states;—that CHRIST “being put to death in the flesh (which suffered no corruption) but *quick* in the Spirit;”—that is, surviving in His own soul the stroke of death which His body had sustained; in that surviving soul, went and preached to the souls of men in prison. Certainly it was not in hell, the place of torment, or into any such place as that of Purgatory that our LORD descended, but, as Bishop Horsley says, “to the invisible mansion of departed spirits, and to that part of it where the souls of the faithful when they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity; the place of *safe keeping* where they are preserved under the shadow of God’s right hand.” Into this place the disembodied spirit of CHRIST descended, and here it was that He preached to those souls, “which were sometime disobedient;” implying, that they were recovered from that disobedience, having before their death been brought to repentance and faith in the promises made to Abraham, and in the coming of a Redeemer. “To such,” says Bishop Horsley, “CHRIST went and preached. But what did He preach to departed souls, and what could be the end of His preaching? Certainly He preached neither repentance nor faith, for the preaching of either comes too late to the departed soul. These souls had believed in the promised *rest* to Abraham, and in a coming Messiah, and had repented, or they had not been in that part

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. Peter iii. 18.

of the nether regions which the soul of the Redeemer visited. Nor was the end of His preaching any liberation of them from we know not what purgatorial pains of which the Scriptures give not the slightest information. But He went to proclaim to them (and to proclaim or publish, is the true sense of the words, to preach,) the glad tidings that He had actually offered the sacrifice of their redemption, and was about to appear before the FATHER as their intercessor in the merit of His own blood. This was a preaching fit to be addressed to departed souls, and would give assurance to their hope of the consummation in due season of their bliss, and this, it may be presumed, was the end of His preaching."

"It does not surprise me, (continues Bishop Horsley,) to find antediluvian souls in this place of safe-keeping for final salvation. On the contrary, I find it very difficult to believe, (unless I were to read it somewhere in the Bible,) that of the millions that perished in the general deluge, all died hardened in impenitence and unbelief, insomuch that not one of that race could be an object of future mercy, excepting the eight persons who were miraculously saved in the ark for the purpose of re-peopling the depopulated earth. Nothing in the general plan of God's dealings with mankind as revealed in Scripture, makes it necessary to suppose that, of the antediluvian race who might repent upon Noah's preaching, more would be saved from the temporal judgment, than the purpose of a gradual re-population of the

world demanded, or to suppose, on the other hand, that all who perished in the flood are to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire."

Still it may be said ;—That our SAVIOUR should have preached to the faithful spirits which were in Hades from the time of the deluge to that of His advent, is what is easily reconcileable to our conception, as far as the Jewish nation and people are concerned ; for they had a divine revelation given to them which they were commanded by GOD to obey ; and although they had the *hope*, they had not the *assurance* of a future state of existence ; and therefore to those who had believed, and repented, and obeyed, it was a most merciful and gracious act that CHRIST, in Hades, had given to them the knowledge of better things to come, now that their souls were existing in a state of consciousness.

With respect to the Gentile world, though unblest with a Divine revelation, they had the light of nature, feeble as it may now be thought, to guide them, by which they had a knowledge of right and wrong,—“a law of works written in their hearts,”—a law of conscience which either condemned or approved their actions, by which law they will be judged ; for GOD has never, in any age or country, left Himself without witness. Although possessed of no revelation of His will, He still ever governed them by His gracious Providence, doing them good in general, sending them rain necessary to fertilize their land, and fruitful seasons of grass, corn, and

cattle, to provide them sustenance. With the recollection of these things, we may see how these considerations apply to the Antediluvian generations. Was it not to show one and all who had obeyed the law of nature, and the law of God, that they were interested in the redemption of the world at large;—the whole world,—by the great sacrifice of atonement made by CHRIST, and accepted by the FATHER? And is it not a matter of comfort and joy to us all, to think how thus the infinite care of heaven has been, and is extended to every human creature born into the world? affording us additional certainty that it was out of His infinite love to man that “He gave His only SON JESUS CHRIST to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption, who there made by that *one oblation* of Himself, *once offered*, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the *whole world*!”

The Scriptures of the Old Testament form an abbreviated history of the dealings of God with man, from the Creation to the Advent of the Messiah, together with the revelation of His Will and the works of His Providence, having an especial reference to His own chosen and peculiar people, who, by a gradual process, became more and more enlightened by the knowledge of divine things. They were favoured with a light specially guiding them in their temporal, as well as in their spiritual affairs, God first giving them Judges, and then vouchsafing Himself to be their King, and afterwards giving them rulers



in succession, and with them a succession of Prophets, warning, teaching, and proclaiming to them the ways of the LORD, and the certain danger and downfall of themselves and their kingdoms if they forsook Him and turned to other, supposed Gods. Yet, in despite of all, how were they signally punished for their disobedience, individually and collectively; for, the corruption of nature adhered to them with a tenacity, which we might almost think the knowledge of the Gospel of CHRIST could only remove, did we not see, in these our days, the same corruption amongst ourselves, though living under a still higher and superior revelation. Yes, the Jewish people will all undoubtedly appear at the same time with the rest of the world before the Supreme Judge to receive a sentence proportioned to their wilful blindness and obstinacy; while others of distinguished piety among them, who were obedient (and they were not a few), will be placed, hereafter, on the right hand of the Throne. The time would fail to tell of Gideon, of the Prophets, and others enumerated and not specified in that eloquent and splendid memorial of S. Paul to the Hebrews, "who having obtained a good report through faith," died in belief of the promise made to Abraham of a heavenly rest, for he, in his day, "saw MESSIAH and was glad," possibly when the LORD JEHOVAH appeared to him in a *human form* in the plain and under the oaks of Mamre.

Those Christians who live under a still more perfect dispensation, with clearer and more certain

knowledge of the ways and works of God, and of His dealings with man ; having, also, been instructed from the earliest period of life, as to what is required of them, to the latest ; and possessed of a light more brilliant to illuminate their path and means of benefiting by it, beyond those possessed by others ;—What are the hopes that they may reasonably entertain when they stand before this dread Tribunal ?

In this, their day, they may read and learn from S. Paul—that there is no respect of persons with God—“ who will render to every man according to his deeds—to them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour,—eternal life. But to them that are contentious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness,—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.”

It is thus that future rewards and punishments will be dispensed, “ when the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His FATHER with His Holy Angels, and sitting upon the Throne of His Glory,”—“ when they that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

What then may we expect when we thus learn how all transgressions will be punished in exact proportion both to the magnitude of the offence committed, and to the motive impelling it ; and all reward dispensed according as the approved deed has proceeded from the human will in co-operation with

the grace of God? But, alas, we see that even our best actions are stained with no little degree of sin, and sin in the least degree is odious in the sight of God. What then can he, even the very best amongst us, expect, but a fearful looking for of judgment; and if it be only thus with those who through life have endeavoured to obey the Will of God, and have lived in a holy fear and reverence of His Holy Name and Will; "if the righteous can thus scarcely be saved; where, where, shall the ungodly and sinner appear?"

This is, indeed, a most awful consideration, for as our LORD said to the Jews, though with a special reference to the people of that single nation only; "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" yet such is the iniquity of our times, and such the resistance against religious truth, that few (comparatively speaking) will persevere and labour in finding it, and will so live and act as to be enabled, by the SAVIOUR's merits, to attain the blessing. Happily, the Scriptures no where make a comparison between the number of such as shall be finally saved and finally lost; they set forth only the qualifications requisite to save all men:—namely, righteousness; a steadfast faith in CHRIST, a watchful care, and good improvement of the talents and graces committed to each, God be thanked!—unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness, for though a God of strict justice, He is a God of infinite mercy. But, then

we must bear in mind, that He dispenses that mercy to such an extent only, as He has promised in His Holy Word:—mercy, to those who, through His grace, have attained to these qualifications. This gracious attribute of mercy is very generally misunderstood, and supposed to apply to all who may indeed hope for it and expect it; but such hopes and expectations convey no ground of the certainty that it will, necessarily, be extended to them.

The condemned and hardened criminal may hope for pardon of his crimes, and it is our duty and our prayer that, under the worst circumstances, God may be pleased to grant it; but the mercy promised in the Gospel is only to the faithful, to the truly penitent, and to the well-doer; for where neither faith, nor penitence, nor any other evangelical virtue has been exercised, mercy under that promise is not included. It may be given in any case, God grant that it may, for it is not in man to limit the attributes or gracious providence of God: still, we can rely with confidence and assurance upon nothing beyond what is clearly written and divinely revealed: we must not,—we cannot, reckon upon uncovenanted blessings. It is this reflection that contributes so much to the comfort of those who, in their endeavours to fulfil the will of Heaven, have exerted themselves to do all in their power for the good of others, and for that of their own souls,—working and co-operating with the grace of God; and it is this that gives the upright and pious man, not, indeed, the *assurance*,

(for S. Paul himself had not that presumption), but gives him the sure and stedfast *hope*,—(that anchor of the soul)—that he may, through the only merits and intercession of his Redeemer, attain unto eternal felicity. And thus the good and pious man while he offers grateful praise and thanks for all the blessings of life that Heaven has bestowed upon him, when he comes to lie upon his last bed, ceases not to invoke CHRIST as his Advocate, his Intercessor, and his *only* Mediator to plead for his pardon and forgiveness. Nor does he himself fail ardently to implore God, Who for our sakes hath accepted the sacrifice which CHRIST offered by His death upon the Cross, and the shedding of His precious blood as an atonement, in propitiation of His justice, for our sins, by virtue of that sacrifice to admit him into the joys of His glorious kingdom. Then casting all his care upon God, he dies in the bosom of his family or friends in the sure and certain *hope* of a joyful resurrection! Having finally endeavoured to make his peace with Heaven, he has trusted, and we also may have hoped and prayed, that his peace has there been made by JESUS CHRIST; and that *his pardon has been sealed, before he went hence* and was no more seen! for, “right dear in the sight of the LORD is the death of His Saints!”

At this point two doubtful opinions have pressed upon the minds of many deep-thinking pious Septuagenarians, held by some few earnest Divines. The one is, that upon the death of the body,

the spirit that tenanted it mounts up at once to the tribunal of the Most High, and is there judged privately before being transferred to either the happy or miserable region of Hades to remain, in safe-keeping, until the judgment of the last day,—then, to be re-united to the body, and to receive its final doom ! Others conceive that when the spirit returns to God, an immediate sentence goes forth, deciding its condition for ever. Both these opinions are mere fancies supported by no warrant of Scripture. But then it is said,—on what conceivable principle can the decision be made between the good and bad in the regions of departed spirits, separating “the just made perfect” from the ungodly,—the gulph between Dives and Lazarus ?

May we not entertain a more reasonable opinion, founded, if not upon the direct warrant of Scripture, yet upon what may be justly inferred from it ; that when Lazarus was consigned to the happy district of these regions, and Dives into that of torment, the decision may have been made in each case upon a perfect knowledge of the incidents of the whole life of each ; so that the one departed with *his pardon sealed in Heaven by JESUS CHRIST*, as he finally closed his eyes, by the forgiveness of his sins ;—and that the other was dismissed from earth without such pardon ? Thus the penitent thief on the day of his crucifixion entered into Paradise, the region of the pardoned ; and Judas, the traitor, when he destroyed himself, went to his own “proper place,” the

region of torment, a place fitted for the base betrayer of his LORD !

But advancing further on this awful subject of CHRIST's Judgment, we have hitherto mostly alluded to the circumstances of the good, the pious, and the religious in this life ; what, then, we may be asked, are the considerations we may entertain as to the case of the moral, compared with the immoral man ?

To be correct in conduct and practice ;—to have given offence to none ;—to have lived in harmony, friendship, or affection ;—to have been kind and compassionate ;—these are indeed great and good moral virtues, but if they have not sprung and been exercised from love of God and love of man, as him, whom that God has created, they are of no account ; for all this falls very far short of righteousness.

No : there must be a spiritual influence to govern and direct these graces in order to produce their full effect. They may have sprung from worldly motives, from the desire of obtaining a good name and character, or in order to preserve a good appearance, and so to be appreciated by the world. Or these may have arisen from innate good-nature ; from sensibility of mind, or tenderness of constitution, or from sympathy ; still, all this is far removed from constituting true religion, being founded upon no other principle, and having no other impulsive motive than that of the world. Life is given to man by the Almighty for some great and good purpose, but more especially, that it may be devoted to the concerns

of his soul, and for the benefit of the souls of others. And yet it would be hard to think that where these virtues abound, that the heart is not open to some higher influences than such as appear outwardly. There must be, we will hope, some inner feeling which though not ostensibly religious, is akin to something much beyond self-interest and ambition. And when we say that there is somewhere a source, a fountain of good-nature and kindly affection, surely we may suppose that these are symptoms and indications of a religious tendency and character which only require more intimate indwelling of the Spirit and the knowledge of the ways of God, and less of the ways of men, to produce a pious and a religious character. How many instances have we witnessed in men, when left to themselves, or to the exclusive society of others like themselves, who have become rationalists, and in the pride of heart have set up themselves for philosophers, satisfied with their own deductions of reason, superseding revelation,—yet some of them, under the affectionate influence of wives, daughters, and sisters, in time, and by degrees, and by the fortuitous occurrence of endless, inexplicable circumstances, (which indeed are all to be ascribed to God) have been induced to take up the Book of Life, and at length, by divine grace and the light they have derived from that higher source of knowledge, have eclipsed the twinkling satellites of their former system. From this time their belief in Christianity becomes gradually fixed, and at the



threescore-and-ten, having seen and deplored their errors, they have turned unto their SAVIOUR and Redeemer, and have at last died in confirmed faith and fear of GOD. These, and such as these we conceive, will be judged and will be dealt with according to their deserts. The labourers who came into the vineyard and worked only the last hour of the day, received the same wages with those that came in at the first. This however, gives no encouragement to such as wilfully delay or neglect their calling; for the labourers came in, as soon as they were invited!

But next, it may be asked, what will be the probable case of the Atheist in that great day? —The Christian Septuagenarian will not readily believe that there really has ever been such a mortal. One, of any intellect and cultivated mind cannot be an Atheist. As the Psalmist says, and as Lord Bacon observes, “The Fool hath said in his heart, there is no God,”—he has *said*, but it is not asserted that he *believed* it. Those several Sophists that have written themselves Atheists, instead of Fools, and who with abundance of learning and wit have propagated and published their infidel sentiments, have done so from affected singularity or the pride of placing themselves above the level of the common intellects of the world; but in their hearts must have been self-condemned, however much they may have endeavoured to conceal, or succeeded in screening, their shame and infamy. Wretched mortals! they hoped to have gained distinguished

characters, as possessing independent minds, unshackled by what they might think the bigotry of custom, and rising with genius they should soar above common comprehension. They made a noise in their day, and, for some little time afterwards, were extolled by their bewildered votaries, but their fame has passed away like the smoke before the wind, and their opinions are only remembered to be despised; in the meantime their writings perish through neglect. What, then, may be supposed will be their doom? —It is not for mortals to decide such a question; but what we collect from Scripture is this,—that where there has been no grace of faith, and thence no reasoning grounded on that faith—where there has been no repentant, though secret sorrow for such perversion of intellect, the wrath of God abideth upon them. The light within them has been made darkness, sound faith has given place to false reason, wisdom made subservient to folly; sad, indeed, therefore is the probable consequence of their rejection; for, assuredly, it is a fearful thing to fall under the vengeance of that Living God Whom they have despised:—"They would none of My counsel; they despised all My reproof; therefore shall they eat of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." But that others may be reclaimed from such ways; may have better hopes and less apprehensions; and may be prevailed upon to turn from such evil examples, now, while they have the opportunity: let them practically study the result of all such

principles, and the dreadful misery ever accompanying them, even in this world, by visiting the unbeliever, in his last and dying hour. He may then see,—as others painfully have seen,—the wretched being, a wasting skeleton, agonized and in despair, dreading to fall into that abyss which he had led others to believe would consign him to the land of forgetfulness, though, perhaps, he himself believed it not. But now, not knowing or thinking what can become of him, or of that recent vivid mind which he possessed, yet dreading, trembling, and feeling something most appalling which he cannot describe, and would not confess, were he able, he is made intensely to feel intolerable anguish. That very feeling testifies self-condemnation, confirmed by a conscience reproving him for the falsities he has practised upon himself and others, for the life he has led, and for the opportunities of amendment that he has scorned; scourging him for the resistance he has made against the good that was ready to promote it, in spite of his self-deceit and pride. He now suffers a remorse, inconceivably bitter; which, however, he still hopes death may stifle; and he either takes the draught within his reach to extinguish thought and life together, or failing in such means, vitality ebbs away, and in his last convulsive gasps he invokes a power he would not openly before avow, and cries out, "O God, O God, help me!"

What the doom of such a man may be, let none

dare to determine; we who read and study the Book of Life can see within its pages no ground even for hope,—what may be the uncovenanted mercy of Heaven, none can know; but of this we are perfectly certain,—that that mercy is infinite!

Now comes the no less painful, and difficult, and bitter contemplation of the circumstances, not of a few, but of the innumerable multitudes of those of the lowest classes of society, who live a mere animal life, without thought, without care, deriding better knowledge, with habits gross and sensual, and in whom the direful corruption of human nature in its full excess, is ostensibly manifested; and who when they die, die as they have lived, without God in the world! Before they appear at the bar of final judgment, are they, however abhorrent from their gross vices,—are they, although thus humanly condemned and despised,—are they to be abandoned by the world for their impiety, their conduct, and their disgusting, complicated wickedness? Oh,—not so. When the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah was great from the enormity of the sins of their people,—what was it that Abraham did to avert the just anger of the ALMIGHTY? Did he not pray and most earnestly supplicate for them? And did not the LORD accept his repeated petitions to spare the sinners if, not only fifty, but if only ten good persons were found within them? And, moreover, did not the LORD mercifully and graciously promise to save, as long as the Patriarch continued to ask? But,

alas, the measure of their iniquity was full ; there were not ten righteous to be found amongst them, and the sinners and their cities were destroyed by a fiery deluge, as all those in the time of Noah had been, by that of water. What then are we, of every age, and of every time, to gather from this ? Not only so to live, that we may not bring down the heavy displeasure of God now upon us ; but that we may avert a still heavier judgment at the last great day ; and that we endeavour to follow the example of faithful Abraham, not presuming ourselves to judge and condemn our fellow-creatures, but making every endeavour, every struggle, and every urgent petition for the salvation of their souls, earnestly pleading on their behalf. And, indeed, such is the woeful picture of the depraved condition of the lowest classes of our people, that we must exert our utmost efforts to arrest the plague that is set in upon our country. We must do, in the first place, what the Disciples of our LORD did in the Wilderness amidst the surrounding perishing thousands: we must take the bread from Heaven, and with the stream from His well of living water, we must dispense nourishment to the souls of those famished ones that have them not. If they, in the naughtiness of their heart, disclaim or refuse the same, the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah is before them ! The task is difficult, the field is wide, and the labour immense ; still, every effort must be made to work out their salvation and our own. The innate corruption is

strong, deep, and wide spreading : the soil is matted with weeds, weeds that must gradually be cleared away before cultivation can commence. To cleanse all the ground at once is impossible ; it must be done by degrees, piece by piece. Union is said, in some instances, to be power ; it is not so in all cases, but it may be, to a vast amount, in this. Let the good and the faithful everywhere take a part, and such a part as, by the means within their reach, they may do something ; and as every one, however well intentioned or desirous of effecting the great object, may not be qualified or fitted for the task, let such devote their worldly means to procure that assistance from others, which they are unable to render themselves.

When we come to take a view of this work as it lies before us, it seems, at first sight, to be far beyond the possibility of any ordinary human means to accomplish ; and so it is, unless we invoke the co-operation of the grace of God to make us instruments in His hands thus to labour for the general good. They of the vast multitude who approach,—distantly approach to the threescore-years-and-ten, are too many of them, so habituated to evil, that they cannot, and will not, learn to do well ; at the same time, though hardship, distress, and sorrows press heavily upon them, they contrive so to live as not outwardly to offend. Other aged ones there are who are kept within the boundaries of peace and good order more from legal restraints, than from moral or religious

motives ; although a motive of another kind is not always wanting, for an aged bad man is commonly despised even by those of his own class.

But, with respect to all, of whatever age or sex, and whatever may be their evil habits or their sinful ways, the great and important questions which every one, in a station above them should ask, are these : —What advantages have they had above those we ourselves possess? Have they had good parents, good masters, good instructors? Have they been born of legitimate or any acknowledged parents? Have they had sufficient food or raiment to support life and protect health? Have they experienced kind treatment from their relatives or friends? and have those relatives or friends afforded them good example and advice? Have they been separated in early life from the contagion of vicious companions? and have those, upon whom they have depended for their sustenance, taught them and brought them up so, that they might afterwards earn their own bread by honest, or compelled them to seek it, by dishonest means? Endless questions of this kind might be asked and answered in a manner to convince every well-regulated mind that, despite the gross wickedness and vice that everywhere so grievously abounds, our pity and our sympathy are due. They call for our greater exertions to uphold our own characters as the disciples of Him who pronounced the poor in spirit, the poor in sorrow, the poor in meekness, and the poor in unjust persecution, eminently blessed.

It must not be forgotten that God has said, that "the poor shall never cease out of the land;" there must be, therefore, gradations in society; there ever has been, and ever must be, high and low, rich and poor, but "the LORD is the Maker of us all." Every attempt that has been made to exalt or to depress the people of a nation to the same level, has not only eminently failed, but has been productive of the most ruinous consequences and danger. An industrious man must necessarily be in a better condition than the idler; the talented man better than the fool; the good man better than the wicked. Poverty is no disgrace where there is piety and honesty. Hard fare, spare clothing, and a low estate may be regarded by some as humiliating, but it never is, and never will be, contemned by the upright and virtuous. The soil of the cottage garden may be made to produce flowers, as beautiful, and with odours as sweet, as in the pleasure-grounds of the prince; and the virtues exhibited in a poor family may have a superior blossom, as having a stronger root, than that of families of a higher caste. All the worst features of the poorer classes are seen, upon reflection, to arise not from the want of heart or affection, but from want of something to bring out those feelings. Kind manners, pity, sympathy, interest in them, in their families, and their affairs;—these scarcely ever fail to extort corresponding emotions. Nature is the same in all;—show the interest we take in their welfare, in their comforts, in the



success of their labour; and however hard and coarse their manners may be, their hearts respond to the sincerity of our endeavours, and we so win them, that they are soon brought to reverence what we reverence, and to love Him, our God and their God, whom we love, and thus to make progress in better habits, in their understandings, and affections. And, what is more,—their children catching with greater rapidity the fire that may thus be kindled in their parents' bosoms and extended to them, breaks out into a greater and brighter flame; the consequence is, that they are soon afterwards seen in the schools, and both of them found to become frequenters and attendants upon public worship.

In all this there is ground for satisfaction and delight, for it is incontestably clear that instruction, based upon religion, is the only sure and certain guide to make the poor sensible of their real wants, alive to their condition, and to convince them that they have, within their own reach, the means of ameliorating them; while we, at the same time, assure them that they are placed in this world for great and good purposes known to God, though unapprehended by them;—purposes, which they are not at liberty to make void, and that all impediments to them, on their part, are sinful. They are to be assured, also, that as contentment with their lot is the proof of a right disposition, so is it the cause of gaining friends to aid them in the world, and making them not only religious, but respectable and useful members of so-

ciety, and thus to raise them in the scale of being. But if they wilfully reject all our attempts to make them better and wiser, and obstinately persevere in pursuing their disorderly and irreligious ways of life, and thus turn from the service of God to remain the slaves of Satan, we are left only to lament their present, and to grieve for, what, we must fear, will be, their future condition. The rich man was negligent, indifferent, and forgetful of God, while the beggar was patient, though despised, and confiding, though in pain and want; the result was, that the former was tormented, the latter was carried into Abraham's bosom. Oh, that men were wise,—“that they would consider their latter end.” What then, it may be asked,—What are we to do in such circumstances? Are we to abandon any on account of their obstinacy, and leave them to themselves, and to their own evil ways? No—no—the evil would only increase; every attempt must be made to arrest the devouring flame and to check it from extending in its progress towards objects in a present state of safety that might otherwise come within its reach.

But if, after all our endeavours at reformation and amendment there be some (would we could think that it were only *some*, but unhappily there are thousands) who, with inexplicable innate vice, will not be moved by any entreaties to amend their lives; if, with a fixed determination they will commit excesses, preferring carnal inclinations and pursuits, inebriety, idleness, and profligacy, to better things,

and will not only not acknowledge a God and a Providence, but persist in ignorance to repel every effort to snatch them, as firebrands from the flame; then—then, alas! what can be done for them? and what must be their inevitable doom?—We must, under these sad circumstances, openly, boldly, and fearlessly declare to them that they must become victims of God's wrath and vengeance! They are now deaf and will not hear; they are now blind and will not see; they will neither change, nor reform, nor repent. They are fast bound in the gail of bitterness; they are the chained captives of the Prince of Darkness; and he takes them from their wretched existence to a state infinitely more miserable. They have given way to their evil passions, to their irregularities, and their vicious propensities; they have violated the laws of man and God, and they now think that as they have lived as mere animals, so they may die like the beasts that perish. But they will find that they are mistaken, and that even this most miserable notion will not and cannot be realized. It is then for the sake of others who may not have fallen into this depth of impious wickedness, but are now standing on its very brink, whom we would arrest, and save, by declaring to them, on the authority of the Scriptures, the awful terrors of the LORD; for it is by these terrors that the Apostle enjoins us "to persuade men." Let them know, then, that Hell is open before them; and as at death their bodies are changed from "corrup-

tion to incorruption," and from "mortal to immortality," so such bodies are thus rendered capable of enduring an eternity of suffering and torment. They are dragged by the Prince of this world and his fallen Spirits into his direful kingdom, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and where every soul of them "shall be salted with fire," so that their bodies may be unconsumable; and what is even worse, "shall there suffer everlasting destruction" from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of His power;—"when they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." This is the Hell which the just vengeance of God has lighted up for the Devil and his angels, in which all the children of Satan, and all his deluded victims, must have their eternal portion,—they who by their hardened and impenitent hearts have "treasured up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath!"

It has been urged by some that this most awful and tremendous punishment is limited to a definite period of time, in proportion to the demerits of the sufferer. Plato has placed the limit to a thousand years; but these, and all other speculative conceptions of this kind, are extremely dangerous, as tending to mitigate the awful penalty so clearly denounced in Scripture, against the wilfully hardened commission of deadly sin. Others there are calling themselves philosophers, who hold, that it is most *irrational* and *inconceivable* that a just God should

punish human frailty, temporarily committed, by a punishment not temporary or limited, but of endless duration.

Here is the great stumbling-block that in these days is put in the way of the progress of truth, by all such philosophers as these, who having made shipwreck of their faith oppose their *puny reason* to the clear revealed Word of GOD. They, in common with the sectarist, assume the audacious privilege of believing only so much of Scripture as makes for their opinions, and of opposing whatever they conceive to be contrary to them, on the ground that *reason* condemns it. But, "Nay, O man, who art thou that repliest against GOD," thus opposing thy ignorance by a denial of what GOD has spoken in His revealed Word?

The same Scriptures that declare the *eternal* happiness of the blessed, denounce the *eternal* misery of the condemned; the same expressions of *eternity* and *everlasting*, being the same in both declarations. "Whatever," says Bishop Horsley, "there may seem of figure in some of these expressions, (of the fire, the worm, and the salt,) as much as this they certainly import:—that the future state of the wicked shall be a state of exquisite torture both of mind and body; of torments not only intense in degree, but incapable of intermission, cure, or end; a condition of unmixed and perfect evil, not less deprived of future hope, than of present enjoyment."

Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the LORD in

judgment, we would persuade men to turn unto Him, for it is by such an inconceivably dreadful assurance, as the Scriptures explicitly set forth for the admonition of all men, on this momentous, terrific, and tremendous subject, that we hold it forth to the view of the wilfully obstinate and incorrigible sinner. Yet, casting a last view upon them, and a last word to them, we add, what it would be well for them to consider,—“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the LORD GOD. Cast away from you all your transgressions; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die?”

The Septuagenarian readily turns from the dark side of human nature to contemplate, as most congenial to his feelings, the brighter part; because he has ever hoped, that although the wicked might be overawed, over alarmed, and stupified by the direful, crushing declarations of Holy Writ, almost past recovery of his apprehensions, that still, they might by the grace of God be persuaded to their good, by turning to them the opposite side of the picture, to show them the happiness, the bliss, and the glory, awaiting those who live and die in the faith of God, such faith as is “rooted and grounded in love.”

We repeat it, that it is evident from Scripture, and is the opinion of the greatest divines and interpreters of it, that “the souls of the faithful after their departure from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity” in Hades, where they are not only at

rest, but in a state of consciousness, expecting greater joy hereafter; and that their happiness is there increased by the hope of participating, in some degree, in the consummation of heavenly bliss. Still they know, that in that kingdom "there are many mansions," and that a separate mansion is assigned to each, according as each has done good in the time of their earthly probation. They know, also, that there are gradations in heaven; some higher, some lower; and that there are archangels, angels, cherubim, seraphim, thrones, principalities, dominions, and powers, in the celestial hierarchy; and that while, in this world, the good and virtuous, in so many instances, have suffered evil things, and the wicked have risen and been prosperous, that now all inequalities will be adjusted, and the mansion assigned to each will be such as to compensate for all the disadvantages and sufferings they have unrepiningly undergone for the sake of righteousness. Whatever mansion may be so assigned we may be confident will be in strict accordance with Divine justice, so that there can be no repining, no envy, but all will rejoice, all will be more than satisfied, and each will delight in the station of the other, whether higher or lower than their own; for whatever it may be, each and all will know, and declare that its bliss surpasses all their former understanding as much as it does all their hopes and expectations! Our present capacities then will be so far exalted above this earthly sphere that no present mental sensation, no reflec-

tion, no conception, can in the remotest degree picture, much less express, "the riches of God's glory on the vessels of mercy;" for, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

In this glorified, spiritual state, the faculties will be so enlarged as to leave all earthly conceptions with the world far behind; for the faithful will become "equal with the Angels, being the children of God, the children of the Resurrection." Mortal weakness and sickness, trouble and anguish of mind will be gone, never again to be experienced; and the expansion of mind and intellect will, henceforth, be employed on the noblest objects, in contemplating the Divine attributes and perfection,—the nature, order, and service of Angels, the works of creation, and Providence, throughout the regions of infinite space, and the mighty and stupendous mysteries of Redemption; so that all will then be able "to comprehend, with all Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of CHRIST which passeth all knowledge."

Nor is this all,—hitherto have we contemplated only the thoughts and ideas of this world in connexion with heavenly things; but the blessed admitted to the glories of the future kingdom may become capable of extending their conception to an unlimited degree, so as to comprehend not one system, but myriads of systems larger than our own,



and at length may be enabled to grasp those of the Universe itself. The spirits of the Just when finally made perfect must advance more and more in all knowledge; their sense must become more refined, their love to God more intense, their allegiance unbounded, their worship infinitely spiritualized! Think then, oh think, ye mortals, of what awaits the good, the faithful, and the blessed in the glorious Kingdom of God, and of His CHRIST! See, and reflect that nothing you can do, however painful, however difficult, or laborious in the cause of the Gospel of CHRIST while you are in this, your state of probation, shall fail you in the great day of the LORD, if, by such faith and well-doing, the sentence be passed upon you, standing on the right hand of the Son of Man in His glory, with all the holy Angels—"Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

Although the Septuagenarian in further advance of years commonly closes life by a gradual bowing down to the grave, free from extreme suffering, yet Providence usually ordains those summoned by death, whether at an early or late period, in most instances, to experience such sickness and pain as to divest their minds of that fortitude to meet the last enemy, which ardent faith in CHRIST can alone supply. Hence how appropriate and how beautiful is the prayer of our Church,—“O holy and merciful SAVIOUR, Thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us

not at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from Thee."

But in all cases where the sincere Christian is called upon to endure a lingering and painful approach to his end, our sympathy is ever due ; for to the acute pains of the body, the mind, distracted by torture, can afford little relief. Still, piety and good sense tend powerfully to concentrate the energies of the sufferer for a patient endurance of agony, not as a matter of unavoidable necessity, but as the trial which God in His wisdom calls upon him to undergo in proof of his faith and confidence in Him. To this, he piously resigns himself in the full assurance that no other burden will be laid upon him than he may be enabled to bear ; and, that if he patiently perseveres in sustaining it, firmly trusting in the mercy and power of divine aid, it will turn out to his profit, and help him on his way to everlasting life ; while he may fix his mental eye upon that reward of "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," promised, as the immeasurable recompense, to this "light affliction" of, comparatively, a moment's endurance.

It was this faith and confidence that enabled the early "noble army of martyrs" to undergo tortures of death that would, otherwise, have been insufferable. It was the same that, in later times, sustained the courage of others, when they were tortured, racked, and burnt, not by heathen persecutors, as in the former case, but by fiery zealots presuming upon their exclusive Christianity, vainly conceiving that

they were "doing God service" by murdering those of His devoted servants whose standard of Holy Writ differed from their traditions.

The religious sufferer in such a painful visitation calls to mind the patience of holy Job, who, amidst his accumulated bodily and mental agonies, persevered in "holding fast his integrity," in despite of the most insidious remonstrances, and whose steadfastness was rewarded by God with two-fold blessings; thus holding out the earliest human example to the devout and holy, in all ages, in no emergency whatever, to distrust the mercy of the Most High, Who ever helpeth them that suffer wrong.

It is in this happier and better condition that the pious Christian is placed, in the time of greatest need, above the irreligious and the wicked, who have no stay whatever to support them when they come to die, who cry when there is none to help.

It is the remark of Cicero,—“that those men who have made the greatest advances in true wisdom are observed to meet death with the most perfect equanimity, while the wicked and ignorant generally see its approach with the utmost discomfiture and reluctance.”

But in these instances, whether of religious or impious persons, whether of those educated or ignorant in which we may be called upon to participate or to witness, it is our duty to pray, and earnestly to pray for such as are unable through pain, or incapable through ignorance, to pray for themselves.

Great, too, is the benefit that may be derived from the awful event, by learning ourselves and teaching others, that there can be "no peace at the last" if it be not built upon the principles and practice of true religion. The godly sufferer has a well-grounded hope, even in the direst pangs of death, of final acceptance through the merits of his SAVIOUR; and that hope is the consolation of those who witness his end, and lay it to their hearts;—but the ungodly sufferer writhes in pain, discouraged and dismayed, exhibiting that awful spectacle of dread and fear, which while they increase his agonies, reflect sorrow and unhappiness on the hearts of relatives and friends.

The Christian Septuagenarian advanced some years further in life, hitherto blessed with health of body and vigour of mind, now feels his strength to lessen while his faith increases. His contemporaries have all passed away, with the exception of some few at a distance from him, and these he will see no more. Unable longer to go abroad, he lives at home in the bosom of his family, surrounded by those who are ever watchful of his health, and ever anxious to administer to his ease and comfort. If he have a wife and family, he never feels abandoned or alone, but has that greatest of all earthly comforts, those who "will not forsake him in his old age and when he is grey-headed." The wife, sad at thinking that she may shortly lose that companion who, through life, has been her guardian, her support, and associate, upholds her remaining spirits that she may assi-

duously tend her husband to the last ; and knowing that she, too, must shortly follow him, thinks only how she may yet live to benefit the children of their affection. If there be sons, they gather, when they can, around their aged parents, and give them, with the assurance of their affection, the sure confidence that they will exert their means and their efforts to sweeten the last days of their remaining lives ; and, if necessary, will approve themselves the faithful and affectionate protectors of their sisters ; while those dear fond daughters and sisters cling, to the last, to their beloved parents, whom they have through life tended with full and pure affection, having ever blended their feelings and their very aspirations with theirs, and between whom, confidence the most perfect has ever subsisted. These ministering angels of comfort hang around the bed, now speaking tender consolations, and now breathing the devoutest prayers for him that is soon about to leave them. But again he rallies and continues yet for a while, and like the flame that seems nearly extinguished, flickers again in its socket, and with this recruited strength, the mind for some days more is restored to its powers, affording sufficient time to ponder reminiscences of Scripture History. Thus, to his calm reflection are again presented the wonders of creation and the marvellous works of God ; and while he sorrows over the fall of the First Adam, rejoices over the triumph of the Second. He next casts his reflections over the Antediluvian World, over Sodom and Gomorrah, and

grieves at the complicated wickedness of man that called for such dreadful and extensive retribution ; but he is relieved by thoughts of Abraham's devoted faith and confidence in God, when he left his own country and all that he had, for another pointed out to him, where all was strange and unknown ; and more than this,—when he offered the typical sacrifice of an only and beloved son, in testimony of a faith which brought with it the high approval and great reward of Heaven. He passes back to think of the Patriarchs of old, and more particularly of Jacob, that good old man, who, although he had attained the age of one hundred and thirty years, exclaimed at the close of them, "*Few* and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage !" Next, he thinks of Moses, and reflects in how many instances he was a type of CHRIST, as repeatedly declared of him—"A Prophet shall the LORD your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me." He, mentally, passes on with him during the forty years he conducted the rebellious Israelites through the Wilderness ; and remarks with sorrow how the generation of them was punished by their not entering into the promised land, and how Moses himself, for one only transgression, was allowed indeed to *see*, but was prohibited from entering into it. He then, one by one, contemplates the characters of the Jewish Leaders, Judges, and Kings, and draws from each the lessons which their lives and conduct exhibit, spending due consideration upon the character, more

upon the ever recurring Psalms, and still more upon the deep penitence and remorse of David. Then again he passes on to the contemplation of the Prophets, upon their monitions, their actions, and their persecutions; dwelling, in short, upon all the leading and most memorable events of Holy Writ, until the Advent of CHRIST; and thus, in the few days that have been added to his existence, he has been blessed with power, devoid of pain, of turning the concentrated force of former reflections to the pleasing and soothing occupation of a mind that, without such a resource, might have been exposed to uneasiness, and perhaps impatience, had it not long, long imbibed the sacred knowledge of what has been written for our learning, and for the acquisition of religious consolation.

And here we see another of the incalculable advantages that the humble Christian possesses over those of which heathens of the highest intellectual minds boasted, as described by Cicero:—"Whatever may be the condition of old age in other respects, inestimable are its advantages in another point of view, if to length of days be added that sweet food of the mind which is gathered in the field of Science. It was on this, Scipio, that your father's intimate friend, Caius Gallus, employed himself to the very last moments of his life: I myself saw him expire, had almost said, while musing upon the distances of the heavenly orbs, and in determining the dimensions of this our earth."—The sublimest of human

studies and of human discoveries among the heavenly bodies, were subjects well worthy of the contemplation of intellectual heathens ; they approached to the outward Heaven, and there, all their wisdom terminated ; but the dying Christian, with his mental eye removing the intervening veil, can penetrate far beyond, and stretch his vision into the "Holy of Holies," and thence draw, not merely food for his mind, but nutriment for his soul !

But now, at length, the man of Threescore-years-and-ten having drawn his thread of life some six or eight years longer, feels that his last end is rapidly approaching, and he is prostrate on his death bed ! He sees and hears the members of his family around him ; they hold gentle and sweet converse ; they read and pray, and he is sensible of all. He has long since made all worldly arrangements, and "set his house in order ;" he has now partaken, in deep faith, the elements of the last Holy Communion, has received the parting embraces of affection from each one around him, and upon all he has raised his hand in blessing ; still, his senses are stronger than his body, and collecting all his remaining power, he is thought to recite—as it is said that Sir Walter Scott did, in his departing hour—portions of that awful hymn with which his "Lay of the Last Minstrel" closes ;—that very ancient divine song, "*Dies iræ*,"—that masterpiece of ecclesiastical piety, which, for its wonderful simplicity of expression, for the fearful sublimity of its ideas, and the telling effect of every word, stands alone in its unapproachable glory ; and is, indeed,



as a human composition, as beautiful as, on such an occasion, it is applicable.<sup>1</sup>

Day of wrath ! O day of mourning !  
See ! once more the Cross returning—  
Heav'n and Earth in ashes burning !

O what fear man's bosom rendeth,  
When from Heav'n the Judge descendeth,  
On whose sentence all dependeth !

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,  
Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth,  
All before the throne it bringeth !

Death is struck, and nature quaking,  
All Creation is awaking,  
To its Judge an answer making !

---

<sup>1</sup> The relatives of Sir Walter, detailing the particulars of the closing scene of his life, relate, that his mind was occupied exclusively in religious contemplations ;—" Whatever we could follow him in was a fragment of the Bible, especially the prophecies of Isaiah and the Book of Job, or some petition of the Litany, or a verse of some Psalm, or some of the ancient magnificent Hymns of the Church in which he always delighted ;—we very often heard distinctly the cadence of the *Dies iræ*."

*Dies iræ ! Dies illa !  
Crucis expandens vexilla,—  
Solvat sæclum in favillâ !*

*Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Juxta est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus !*

*Tuba mirum spargens sonum,  
Per sepulcra regionum,  
Coget omnes ante thronum !*

*Mors stupebit et natura  
Cum resurget creatura,  
Judicanti responsura !*

Lo, the Book expressly worded,  
Wherein all hath been recorded,  
Thence shall Judgment be awarded !

When the Judge His seat attaineth,  
And each hidden deed arraigneth,  
Nothing unreveng'd remaineth !

What shall I, frail man, be pleading ?  
Who for me be interceding,  
When the Just are mercy needing ?

King of Majesty tremendous,  
Who dost free salvation send us—  
Fount of pity, then befriend us !

Think, kind JESU, my salvation,  
Caus'd Thy wondrous Incarnation,  
Leave me not to reprobation !

---

Liber scriptus proferetur !  
In quo totum continetur  
Unde mundus judicetur !

Judex ergo cum sedebit,  
Quidquid latet apparebit,  
Nil inultum remanebit !

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus ?  
Quem patronum rogaturus,  
Cum vix justus sit securus ?

Rex tremendæ majestatis,  
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
Salva me ! Fons pietatis !

Recordare ! JESU pie,  
Quod sum causa Tuæ viæ,  
Ne me perdas illâ die !

Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,  
On the Cross of suff'ring bought me,  
Shall such grace be vainly brought me ?

Righteous Judge of retribution,  
Grant Thy gift of absolution,  
Ere that reck'ning day's conclusion !

Guilty now I pour my moaning,  
All my shame with anguish owning,  
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning !

Thou the sinful woman savest,  
Thou the dying thief forgavest,  
And to me a hope vouchsafest.

Worthless are my prayers and sighing,  
Yet, Good LORD, in grace complying,  
Rescue me from fires undying !

---

Quærens me sedisti lassus,  
Redemisti, crucem passus,  
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Juste Judex ultionis,  
Donum fac remissionis,  
Ante diem rationis.

Ingemisco, tanquam reus,  
Culpâ rubet vultus meus,  
Supplicantî parce, Deus !

Peccatricem absolvisti,  
Et latronem exaudisti,  
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meæ non sunt dignæ,  
Sed Tu, bonus, fac benigne,  
Ne perenni cremer igne !

With Thy favour'd sheep, O place me,  
Not among the goats abase me,  
But to Thy right hand upraise me.

While the wicked are confounded,  
Doom'd to flames of woe unbounded,  
Call me with Thy Saints surrounded !

Low I kneel with heart-submission ;  
See ! like ashes my contrition !  
Help me in my lost condition !

Ah ! that day of tears and mourning,  
From the dust of earth returning,  
Man for judgment must prepare him.  
Spare ! O God, in mercy, spare him !  
Thou, O gracious JESU, LORD,  
To us eternal rest afford.

Amen.

---

Inter oves locum præsta,  
Et ab hædis me sequestra,  
Statuens in parte dextra.

Confutatis maledictis,  
Flammis acribus addictis,  
Voca me ! cum benedictis !

Oro, supplex et acclinis,  
Cor contritum quasi cinis,  
Gere curam mei finis.

Lacrymosa Dies illa,  
Quâ resurget ex favillâ  
Judicandus homo reus.  
Huic ergo parce, Deus !  
Pie JESU, Domine,  
Dona eis requiem ! Amen.

At length the dying Septuagenarian feebly clasps his hands in silent supplication, and with eyes raised upwards, whispers a faint "Amen,"—and,—he is gone!—his spirit has fled!

"Oh! may our last end be like his!"

APRIL, 1856.

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